

GOLDEN SHEAVES

by Rev. Mr. Bererly Carradine

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By

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CHAPTER 1

“THE PATTERN IN THE MOUNT”

When the leader of Israel left the plain and climbed the mountain side, he saw the tent-covered country, with its multitudes, grow faint, indistinct and finally disappear, and as he reached the summit of the mount the cloud of God's glory descended upon and enveloped him.

He was there forty days, we read, and in that period saw God, had the Ten Commandments given him, and in addition had revealed the exact pattern of the Tabernacle which was to be constructed and erected in the plain for the spiritual good of the people. Not only the shape and size were shown, but every curtain and board, tenon and socket, with colors, breadths, lengths, measurements, proportions and minutest details of this movable House of the Lord were clearly and amply given. He was charged by the Almighty to see that the Tabernacle was made according to this pattern shown him in the mount.

We do not doubt that something analogous to this takes place in every man's life at some time. At such an hour a vision is granted to the momentarily caught away soul, of a life so pure, noble and useful, that in some respects the individual never gets over it.

It is as though the Lord had taken him away and out of himself for a while, and made him see and dream of an existence so much superior and better than the one he was living, that the result ever after, even though salvation never came, was an inner aching and longing which could not be satisfied, no matter how the world flattered and honored and rewarded.

There are occasions that are like mountains rising up out of the plain of life. Something happens to make the man know he is more than an animal; that he is responsible for his actions here and hereafter; is accountable to God, and is immortal. There come glimpses of the life and character that should be, which for a moment is as if one should see a white hand slip out of the blue sky, pull back a sunset cloud and give a brief glimpse of a shining city, far beyond in the heavens. It takes a struggle to keep down or forget the impression. Whiskey, morphine, business, amusements and sin of every kind are sought to deaden and destroy that awakening of the soul, the result

of its brief glimpse of duty, privilege and the real purpose of life.

The pillow of a desperate sickness is one of these mountains from which we get to see the pattern of a true life. It is wonderful what correct views a man obtains of things in general and duties in particular when he is a very ill man. The earth recedes and heaven draws very nigh. A very beautiful figure of the life which he should have lived is let down from the skies and set up before Him. Boards and curtains, tenons and sockets, tables, lights, bread and all are very plain to him now. Everything he should have done, and the result of so doing in a beautiful character structure is perfectly evident. He did not see it when down among men, and had to ascend the mount of a sick pillow to get the view.

Another mountain is the pillow of death. This is a Mont Blanc among the ranges for distant and terrifying views.

We have never read a single traveler's description of the ascent and final standing upon the summit of the famous monarch of the Alps without sympathetic thrills of fear. That dizzy elevation, the awful depths all around, the remoteness of the world, so to speak, the slip and dreadful fall from its peak through space into unknown depths of a number of travelers, all would come back to us with sickening power. The pillow of death is a Mont Blanc indeed. What a height it has; What awful depths around it! How remote seems the earth and how far away all human life looks! How slippery the place on which we stand! and what falls and rushes through space take place from that pillow.

And here also is seen that wondrous pattern of a proper life. You need not tell a dying man his duty. He knows it. He sees the truth. He sends for his enemy and begs forgiveness. He warns his careless, sinful neighbor. He entreats his family to be saved. He is gentle, kind and considerate now, not only to his household, but to every one else. He marks the tenons and sockets, and beholds the size and shape of things. All is clear now where the lights ought to hang, the table be set, and the bread laid. What a perfect view he has now of the Tabernacle of life. He recognizes the need of the incense of prayer, and, above all, of the slain Lamb in front of the sanctuary. How correct, orthodox, sensible, moral, well behaved and even spiritual he has become. He sees at last what kind of man he should have been; but he had to ascend the mount of Death to behold the pattern.

Another Mount is recognized in the effect of a wonderful Gospel sermon preached by some holy man of God. Under the influence of the Word and Spirit, the careless, thoughtless, selfish, sinful soul was caught up into a

high place, from which mental and spiritual elevation the earth became very small, and heaven very near, and the purpose of creation and redemption very plain, and where the kind of life God wanted one to live, and the character He desired one to build was as distinct as the divine exhibition of the form of the sanctuary was to Moses.

So clear have been these presentations of duty to the mind, so unmistakable was the very work of life marked out in that high and holy hour, that numbers set out at once to fulfilling the plan, and building to the divine model. And so seas are crossed, colleges entered, slums are invaded, meetings are started, habits are given up, and duties are performed of every kind, and all in obedience to a certain pattern prescribed them by the hand of God, while caught up and away from the tent-covered plain, and far above the duties and pleasures of everyday life.

A fourth Mount is seen, or, rather ascended, by a perfect consecration of self to God, and a persistent waiting upon Him to know His whole mind and will.

He that leaves the plain, to be alone with God, and to learn of God, will soon find himself upon a mount indeed. Something like a cloud of glory will hide the people from him, and also conceal him from the people. The days of waiting may differ in number, according to the condition and character of the worshipper, but to all who tarry will come such an exhibition of duty, such an outline of life, such revelations of the divine will in matters both general and particular, that the soul can go at once without hesitation to the building or fulfilling of that glorious design. The trouble with many is not that the vision has not been given, but the directions and specifications have not been followed. The slain lamb is not kept on the altar in front of the door. The incense ceases to rise. Some boards and curtains are lacking. The tenons do not fit in the sockets. The bread is scarce or moldy. The lamps are forgotten or burn dim. The olive oil is not beaten according to direction. The fire died out on the altar.

The one command of God to most of His people is, See thou build according to the pattern I showed you in the mount.

In these days of worldliness, backsliding, strifes and divisions among God's people, the individual Christian needs to study that pattern afresh.

Several thoughts came to the mind of the writer as we dwelt on this Bible picture.

One is that some men act as if they never had beheld such a pattern.

The explanation is that the vision is shown in the mount and most men live in the low grounds. They will not ascend from the walks and ways of everyday life to find out whether there is another as distinct and separate as is the intellectual and physical.

To such people certain books are sealed, certain sermons are mystical, if not altogether senseless, and the deepest truths of the Scriptures without meaning. The Jews at the foot of the mountain no more saw the design of the Temple given to Moses on the top of the mountain, than do some people today apprehend and appreciate the beauties of holiness enjoyed and understood by others who have complied with spiritual conditions.

A second thought is that while some get a hasty glimpse of the life plan, not all see every part.

The Bible says God showed Moses every part of the structure, — curtain, board, pillar, ring, socket, door, and everything complete. Moses tarried until He did so. In like manner God would make a faithful disclosure of all He wants in us. He would prescribe every act and lead in all things. But some are in too great a hurry to leave the mount. They do not tarry long enough. They get the plan of the door of entrance, but not the curtain of silence. They get the wreaths and lily work, but overlook the pillars which stand for quiet strength. There is a lack of harmony, roundness and symmetry in the character makeup. One-sidedness, narrowness, extremism, rashness, needless severity, are features in the life that are criticized and condemned by the world itself, as it listens to the profession at one moment and sees the poor possession the next. Truly some of us who talk so loud about seeing the pattern in the Mount ought to remain until we get the whole spiritual structure profoundly impressed on mind and heart. The sight of a tabernacle or temple with one side utterly gone is a ghastly vision. and a Christian mouthing deep experiences with some beautiful and necessary parts of the Christian life altogether missing is a still more fearful sight.

A third thought is that these patterns may vary as to the character of work we perform, but never in regard to the Christlikeness or holiness of heart we should possess.

For instance, some are called to very active pursuits, in pulpit, mission work, reform measures and labors of benevolence. Others seem anointed for lives of patient suffering. Some are for the public, others evidently for

the home, and obscurity itself. But all are called to be the very best they can be in their divinely allotted places. They have had the vision on the Mount of what heaven expects. They come down with shining faces from campmeeting or church pew, or closet of prayer, with all the parts and details of that wonderful life of the future fairly burned into them by the Spirit of God. A holy hush was upon them for days. They wanted a veil like Moses to cover the face which had become a luminous window of the soul.

A fourth thought is that Satan's incessant attempt is to change the pattern.

He likes to get these illumined souls confused by altering the divine plan. He would change the spheres and realms of labor. He would sidetrack or pocket a man with a public mission into a hidden and contemplative life. He would take the one whom God had intended as a home angel and make a nasal-tongued platform talker out of her. He would change patterns and swing corners with a vengeance, and, getting the square peg in the round hole and the round peg in the square orifice, see God's plans brought into temporary confusion, while he rejoices over the mischief and bewilderment he has created.

Sadder still, he would alter the pattern of holy character, making additions that were not in the heavenly manifestation, and removing things that were. The sight of bits of old lumber nailed along the sides of a beautiful edifice is not as repulsive a spectacle as the vision of one of these holy lives becoming worldly. This or that questionable practice is accepted; this or that habit is taken up; this or that looseness of speech or thought adopted, until men fairly groan when he talks about the visions he had in the mount; what God showed him; and how he is living up to the revelation of that hour.

A fifth thought is that when we cease to build according to the pattern, we begin to lose the glory out of the soul and the power out of the life.

God holds us accountable for that wonderful vision. It is light, and we are always held responsible for light. Besides this, a sense of inward condemnation is bound to spring up. And worse still, the thought of being hypocrites and liars must and will arise if we testify one way and live another. Who has not felt the spiritual qualm and misgiving in hearing some one arise in a testimony meeting and say, "This is the happiest day of my life. I have never been happier than now," when the hard straight lines of the face and the cold-looking eye and easily managed voice all declared to the contrary.

The honest query was, Is that the pattern he saw in the mount? Why, we saw him the morning he received the blessing and he looked like a seraph. What is this now before us?

The testifier sat down amid a profound silence. The stillness was eloquence itself. The condition of moving people when we talk is that the tabernacle or temple of life is going up according to that wonderful character design shown us on a hilltop of glory.

A final thought is that when we have trifled with the pattern and gone to building poorly, the best thing to do is to revisit the Mount where we first had the vision.

It is deeply significant that when idols got into Jacob's family, and his sons acted with such cruelty to the people of Shechem, God told him to go up to Bethel at once. Bethel was the place where he saw the wonderful ladder reaching to heaven and the Lord at the top looking down on him. He had called the spot the Gate of Heaven and named it the House of God. Now, after certain character drifting, God says, Come back to Bethel.

We are no worshippers of localities, but we do recognize a sacred, solemn power, or holy influence, an actual glory, to rest upon and about the spot where we first met God, and the place where afterwards He baptized us with the Holy Ghost. The sight of the room where we first saw the light of this world does not move us as much as the contemplation of the spot where we were born of God, and that still more sacred place where we met Him face to face, had the name changed from Jacob to Israel, felt that we had prevailed, and knew that God had given us a holy heart.

We believe this experience to be common with all of God's people; so that a visit to these places would act upon the soul with most tender and gracious power. Memory and association would do much, but God would do more. The forgotten covenant would come back, the faithlessness repented of, and the careless life forsaken. The icy feeling about the heart would melt under returning warmth, and a rush of sweet, happy tears would cleanse and restore the vision to the eyes that had lost something of their power to see into men's souls, into the Word, and far away into heaven. It would pay to try it.

We know a lady who had been graciously converted at an old country church when a girl of eighteen. She afterwards married, became prosperous, got absorbed in earthly things and became a cold, hard woman of the world. Twenty years rolled by, and under the providence of God she

was invited to attend the Saturday morning service of a quarterly meeting held at this same old church. We saw her hesitate and knew a spiritual battle was going on in her breast. God was saying to her, "Come back to Bethel," while the enemy was striving hard to keep her in his power.

Suddenly she said she would go, and in the carriage ride of three miles was profoundly silent. The presiding elder, a holy man of God, preached. She sat at the side of the church with a black veil over her face. Thirty feet in front of her at the altar was the place where God spoke peace to her soul nearly a quarter of a century before, and she had drifted, drifted, drifted, until the light had gone out of her soul, and gloom and winter was her spiritual portion.

When the preacher at last finished his truly powerful sermon and called for mourners, she was the first to come, crossing the body of the church and seeking a certain place at the altar. The audience did not understand the movement, but God did, and she did. She wanted to kneel on the very spot where she had met God twenty years before.

Down she went in an abandonment of grief, and with a low, heartbroken cry. She had not knelt a minute, when every one in the church saw that she had met God again. The joy of the woman was actually felt in the congregation before she spoke, for face and form both declared before the lip, that she had found Him whom her soul loved. She had come back to Bethel and it had proved profitable and blessed indeed.

Sometimes we cannot get to the locality with these bodies of ours, but we can always return to the memory, and to the hour, and then recalling the covenant vows, replacing every gift upon the altar and standing patiently, humbly, faithfully, unreservedly by the sacrifice, God will appear again and do exceeding abundantly for the soul above all that was asked or thought.

Certainly it would be well for many who read these lines to stop and compare the vision in the Mount with the fulfillment in the life, the divine plan with the human character structure.

In that memorable day of one's conversion or sanctification, in that moment of pulpit transfiguration, or Patmos opening of the skies, the plan, style, spirit and conduct of the life to be lived was perhaps nothing like its present appearance and performances. Then it looked like an ark freighted with blessings and saving many lives. Now it may look like a battleship with booming guns, torpedo tubes, and with its one mission, war. Once like a sanctuary of holy love and peace, now a fort with cannon pointing in

every direction, both at friend and foe.

When God first showed the pattern of that holy tabernacle of life which was to be built and moved about for the good of earth and the glory of heaven, there was no place for daggers, shelves for acids and poisons, and no nasal grating, phonographic-like sound of abuse, tirade and calumny proceeding from the most Holy Place.

The sight was that of a bleeding Lamb on the altar, a priestly soul, with lustrous face, ministering among holy things, a sweet incense of prayer constantly ascending, the warm bread of life in full view, lamps of profession burning brightly, and the glory of the Shekinah, or indwelling God, appearing even through the veil of the countenance of clay.

Certainly it would be well for many to stop today and say, "Am I a sanctuary of grace and love, or a walking arsenal; a St. John or a Rough Rider; a lifeboat or a torpedo vessel; an Indian with tomahawk, paint, feathers and scalps of God's people at my belt, or like an angel with outspread wings flying through the land with the everlasting Gospel to preach? Am I a Morgue with blood and brains splashed around on the tables and floor, or a Tabernacle where God comes and reveals Himself in blessings to His people, where His honor dwelleth, His presence abides, and His voice can always be heard speaking from over the Mercy Seat?"

May God grant that as this chapter is finished by the reader, he will immediately kneel and ask God to show again the pattern revealed to him months or years ago in the Mount of one of his best and holiest moments. Perhaps many will be made to rejoice to see how closely they are following the divine plan. And perhaps there may be others who will be so pained and shocked at the contrast between the original pattern, and the present diverse and disagreeing building, that out of it will grow repentance, reformation, reclamation, restoration, salvation, holiness, usefulness and blessedness itself, not only to themselves, but to many thousands of souls in the present and in future generations.

CHAPTER 2

THE TOTAL NATURE OF SIN

When we look at the effect of sin in the world, its heartaches and heartbreaks, its sorrow and sickness, its crimes and countless graves, there is first a natural wonder that all should have been brought about by one transgression in the Garden of Eden.

At first glance the result seems out of all proportion to the cause; and such a general disaster to the bodies and souls of a whole race without reasonable connection with the act committed in the Garden.

Reason itself, however, is against such a conclusion, as we see the water rushing through a single crevice of a large ship and destroying both life and property of all on board. The moral crack or aperture was furnished in a deliberate act of disobedience in Paradise, to let a deluge of evil loose upon mankind.

Investigation of the occurrence also reveals what escapes the observation of many quibblers and fault-finders, and that is the totality or wholeness of the nature of sin. One sin seems to be connected with all the rest. A ghastlier kind of Siamese nexus binds them together. In David's transgression the following links are seen, — a wrong look, lust, an evil determination, adultery, falsehood, making Uriah drunk, abuse of power and murder. Upon this seem to come spiritual indifference and hardness, out of which condition Nathan was sent to arouse him. So the sin of David comprehended a number of others. It had a dreadfully total look about it.

In the examination of what is called "the first sin," it is found to present the same features of totality about it. Both soul and body were in the fall. Intellect, sensibilities and will went down together with a crash. Faculties of mind and members of body entered upon a partnership to commit the evil. The eye saw the fruit, the ear listened to the devil, the heart longed for it, the palate streamed at the sight, the feet drew near, the appetites appealed, the conscience was gagged, the will surrendered, the hand plucked the fruit, the lips and tongue closed upon it, the body received it, and the whole man fell. It was a total fall. All went down.

It is this view of sin that gives it its exceeding gravity and horror. It sends

its roots into every part of the nature and life. Like the tares it is intertwined and interwoven with the wheat. To pull up one seems to be the dragging forth of the other.

The defense of a single sin is heard on all sides. Nearly every one “of the world,” and many Christians as well, confess to one sin. No one dreams of apologizing for all sin, or for many sins in one individual. The argument is made, and vindication urged and protection demanded, for the solitary sin.

All this is done from ignorance of the awful entirety or wholeness of sin. The visible tree is not all, but countless roots run as far under the ground as the branches shoot in midair, and wrap themselves about boulders and stones in the darkness underneath, that no human eye has penetrated.

A surgeon will tell you that in cutting out a cancer the difficult thing to do is the tracing up and removal of the roots, which wind away in the most intricate manner.

The thief steals a five dollar bill. It took the whole man to do it, of mind, body and soul, the latter consenting to do it, the intellect devising the way, and the body being used by the prostitute soul and mind as an instrument. Now, after the theft, comes the necessary countless lies about it, anger at the thought of suspicion, and profanity in contradiction. Still later is studied hypocrisy, the double life, a heart growing harder all the time, and a soul finally devil-possessed.

A slanderous or unjust accusation against another fellow creature brings about repetitions of the offense with a marked increase of bitterness in spirit and hardness in voice and manner. Truth and justice within are trampled upon and outraged. Pity and mercy are wounded or driven from the heart, and the character of the detractor becomes far more injured than that of the detracted. Few of us but have noticed that if we can keep our own tongues when wronged, we escape a greater moral calamity and suffering than that which comes to us from the gossip and slander of uncharitable people.

Sin is so peculiarly dreadful in the way it permeates the character and life that he who enters upon the course of single transgression might as well prepare for general moral bankruptcy.

Such a transgression may be extenuated and defended on the ground of its being not one of the great offenses or crimes; but transgressions belong to the family of sin? have a family likeness and are fond of family reunions. It may require a few weeks or months to assemble the household, but the day

comes when it looks from the appearance of the eye and face, and the sound of the voice, and the conduct of the life, that the whole tribe had arrived for the dining, with the Devil at the head and the Old Man at the foot, and scores of the imps and brats of hell squirming and wriggling on the floor under the table.

Of course after that first general gathering successive ones are larger and much more quickly obtained. Then rooms are taken and the disposition is to leave no more.

One thing now becomes absolutely sure, and that is, there must be quick repentance and turning from all evil, or there will be certain damnation. and yet all this was brought about by one sin, and that sin may have started in the eye, hand, tongue or heart, and at its beginning it may have been counted a really nice or respectable thing.

Some one has likened the Ten Commandments to ten links of a chain which kept us from falling into the pit. To break any one of them would be to go plunging down to ruin. But this view seems to be held only of the Ten commandments by many, when the truth is that every transgression of earth is a violation of the spirit or letter of the Decalogue. Those ten laws or prohibitions of God are so federal in their character that they cover all the misdoings of men and overarch every ramification and expression of evil.

So it is that a look leads to lust and adultery; coveting to stealing; hasty and extravagant speaking to false witnessing; and passionate outbursts to murder. All the great sins or crimes are approached by these first steps or approximations. The adulterer confesses that his fall began with looks, imaginations and unexpelled desires of the heart. The drunkard started with tipping. The murderer says he can trace his crime back to outbreaks of temper, or to mental dwellings upon real or fancied injuries.

This deep grounded, widespread nature of sin in the soul shows the folly of trying to check, conquer and destroy it in a departmental way. One section of the soul is not good and another bad. The sin principle or nature is seen by the Bible reader and real heart student to exist in this strange, horrible way of totality or wholeness. To fight it in one quarter and suppress it, is to see it manifest itself immediately in another way, dissimilar form, in a different part of the life. We have seen people quit cursing, but kept up scoldings; seen them give up drink, but take to other habits equally dreadful. We have known men to surrender immoralities and yet manipulate the severest of tongues or become oppressors of the family circle and lords over God's heritage. Meantime none of them would do the

former things which they had renounced, but still they were sinning in other lines.

Such fights are endless and hopeless. It is the old conflict with the hydra-headed serpent, told of in mythology; and the same ghastly, dreadful fact known then and put in fable, we read now plainly in the Word of God and find proved in the uncleansed, unholy heart.

This totality of sin demands a total cure. We must have a remedy greater than the disease. The Savior must be mightier than the devil and all evil, and his salvation must be more than sufficient in its provisions for the Fall.

We must have a Blood that cleanses from all sin, a Power to keep us from falling and a Redemption that saves every member of the body, every faculty of the mind, and every power of the soul, and keeps the man saved all the time.

Jesus Christ has come with this perfect salvation. He can give the pure eye, the chaste lip, the kindly tongue, and the loving, gentle, holy, Christlike heart. If we let Him, He will take out all sin from the nature, purify our souls, dwell in us all the time, and live His life through us again upon the earth.

If we do not believe this, then we can never know the full power of grace in our spirits. He can do no mighty works where there is unbelief. But if we believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. "According to your faith, so be it unto you." These are Christ's own words, and by them we see that faith is not only the condition of salvation, but the measure of salvation. May the Lord increase our faith.

CHAPTER 3

THE UNFOLDING OF SALVATION

The Bible is a marvelous Book in more ways than one. One striking feature is its manner of opening up to the spiritual reader. Because of this it is a different book to people of different lives and characters. It is one kind of volume to the sinner and a very dissimilar one to a Christian. It attracts a child, holds with a deeper spell the adult, and throws a far more potent influence over the aged. To the unconverted man it has one meaning, to the converted soul a far deeper teaching, and to the sanctified a still profounder signification. Nor is this all; the closer a man lives to God, the more he walks in the light of truth and along the path of perfect obedience, the more luminous and precious and wonderful becomes this Book.

Hence it is that some people often accuse others of having strained or wrested the Scripture, when with a pure heart and holy life they had seen deeper into the word than others. For say what we will about rules of interpretation and laws of exegesis, after all it takes what we call religious experience to understand the Bible. Then, after that comes the ever deepening meaning of words, verses and paragraphs. Spiritual provision has been stored away in under floors which at first were unseen. Strata lie under strata of blessed truth. A box of treasure is found underneath a field that is fruitful in itself.

A very holy woman once told the writer that she often lived a whole week in one verse of Scripture. Being a young Christian then, he stared and wondered, but since then has come to perfectly understand what she meant.

In the deepening meaning of the word we see the unfolding salvation. The Book suits all who approach it. It has food convenient for all. The man who prefers surface water can have it; but he who wants to strike an artesian stream can do so in the Scripture by boring. He who prefers to make his crop in the field can do so, but whoever would like to find a box of money buried in the same ground and be rich, and rest from "his labors," can do so. The Book is full of hidden treasure.

One verse will illustrate our meaning and also bring out the thought of an unfolding salvation. The passage is in the first chapter of Matthew. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their

sins.” This verse has been growing on the writer all the days of his life.

When a child the first impression was in connection with the angel. The thought of wonder was that a being from another world should fly down and talk to a woman.

By and by the second impression or astonishment was the statement that a virgin should bring forth a child.

After this the word Jesus struck the thinking lad. The letters of the name were larger than the rest on the page, and so helped to impress the mind.

Later on the boy again was impressed with the fact that this child was to be a Savior. The two words, Jesus and Savior, then became connected.

After this followed years of mental disentanglement and we might say uneducation. We were fairly driven to notice that He had not come to save us from poverty. Not a little fretting and repining have been indulged in by Christians on this line. Again and again many have construed poverty to be an indication of not possessing the smiles of Heaven, while the worldly and financially successful were called “blessed,” “fortunate” and “favored.” Reflection as well as the Scripture came to our help here in the thought that the Lord spoke of the difficulty the rich would find in being saved. He would scarcely be consistent if He put such a peril upon the struggling souls of His people.

Again we noticed that He had not come to save us from sickness. The angel never mentioned this fact to the Virgin. The word was not used. It is true that Christ can and does heal the body; and that proper Christian living will in itself save us from many diseases; but sooner or later we all get sick enough to die, and more than that, some of the most beautiful teachings and illustrations of the spiritual life have come to us from the sick bed. In many instances it has been a pulpit of fire, a throne of power, and also a platform, arena, or theater upon which were displayed Christian grace and gifts, that could not have been otherwise beheld, and we might say exercised. We have beheld the most gracious results flow from the sick room, both to the afflicted and those who were brought into the presence of the sufferer. Truly to many millions it has been a school of grace, while the most holy, tender and enrapturing visits have been paid by the Lord to the pale-faced inhabitants of what is called the sick room.

Still later we discovered that He had not come to save us from temptation.

Some people have been taught that it is a sin to have an evil thought or image presented to the mind. They have not been able to discriminate between an involuntary happening and a voluntary act of the soul; between a suggestion or urging of the devil instantly put away, and the cherishing of the same.

In our present life of moral trial we fail to see how there can be any advancement and development, any deep self-knowledge as well as reward in the coming world, if we are not subjected to divers kinds of tests and temptations. Christ came to save us in, but not from temptation.

Further along still, we noticed that He did not come to save us from trouble.

It is true that He puts an end to that internal worry and grief which comes from sin, but we live after being saved, in a world full of sorrow, and this earthly abode is not changed because we are transformed. So loved ones continue to die, fortunes take wing, friends grow cold and fall away, health breaks down, disappointments come thick and fast, hopes vanish, partings and separations abound, and thus we move through the years, on the way to the grave.

As we notice the peculiar effect of these natural sorrows upon the Christian heart, we see at once that they have their certain place and work in our lives, and that it is blessed for us that we are not saved from them. Truly it is marvelous how slowly but surely they wean us away from the world in which we live. We are not necessarily soured or embittered; for if that be the case then are we damaged by our bereavements; whereas it is intended of God that these afflictions shall work out good for us both here and hereafter.

By them our treasures are transferred to the skies, the tremendous hold that the earth and time and sense have upon us is loosened, the cords are cut, ties snapped, the vanity and emptiness of terrestrial things is seen, the satisfying, enduring nature of heaven disclosed, the heart gets weaned, the balloon tugs away at the single confining rope, the bird with the first opening of the cage door is ready to spring away with a glad, restful song into the blue heavens.

Truly in the beginning of manhood and womanhood it is a dreadful wrench upon nature and faith itself to lie down in the grave. A thousand hopes, ties, pursuits, attachments and relations of various kinds bind the life to this planet. But God in His goodness lets trouble come and sever these bands and bonds one by one, until at last at a certain age in life we find most

people perfectly willing to go. The final departure from the earth has been made easy, not only by grace itself, but by the peculiar education and preparation of sorrow.

We had a noble ministerial friend in the South who died at the age of seventy. He used to take his walking cane and stroll out to the city cemetery, a mile away, almost every day. It was no unusual sight to see his black-robed figure sitting in profound thought on a tombstone, or resting at the foot of a sighing pine tree, with graves all about him.

One day his daughter asked him, "Father, why do you go to the graveyard so much?"

The tears gushed into his eyes as he replied:

"I seem to know more people out there than I do here in town. Most of my friends are out there, my child."

Still again we observed as the Bible was studied in connection with its wonderful Commentary Life, that Jesus had not come to save us from death.

God's people die, the very best die; and the writer for one is not sorry over the fact of dissolution, when he remembers what is accomplished by it. We are so constituted in body that we cannot see Christ and the Kingdom of Glory above unless we die. Death is the door that hides heavenly objects from view, while its opening brings us face to face with God, the angels, and those we loved best on earth. Long before we touch the door knob of the tomb this thought will have taken such possession of us that fear will vanish and a sweet thrill of blessed expectancy be in the heart that in a few moments we will stand before the King whom we love supremely and be clasped in the arms of those who were on earth as dear as life to us.

When a child playing under the trees in the yard with brothers and sisters, when the shadows of night began to approach, a servant would be seen approaching us with the message, "Your father or mother says come into the house," we would promptly arise and obey, and as we came into the cheery sitting-room, with its cracking fire and gleaming lamp, and later into the comfortable dining-room, with its well supplied table, and still later, back to the sitting-room, with its picture books, quiet games and loving companionships of father, mother, and elder brothers and sisters, we certainly did not feel that a hardship had been done us; but the exchange from the cold, shadowy yard to the warm, cheery, fire-lit and love-lit house

was most agreeable and altogether best.

So, one of these days, as we are employed in life, the twilight will fall about us and upon us, and Death, one of God's servants, will draw near and touch us on the lung, or heart, or brain, and say:

“Your Father says come home.”

And we will meekly lay down everything in our hands, and as obedient children rise up and go into the heavenly mansion. Truly, it will be a blessed exchange. Surely as we take on the light, warmth and glory of the Father's House, look upon the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, feel the atmosphere of love and welcome, bask in the presence of the heavenly Father and Elder Brother, hear the voices and see the faces dearest to us on earth, and know we are now shut in forever with God and the Redeemed — surely! surely! surely! we will admit that we lost nothing by death, provided always that in that death we died in the Lord.

No, evidently Christ did not come to save us from death in this world. That little verse in Matthew does not say so. The angel did not intimate such a thing in talking to the virgin. And yet Jesus is a Savior, and also a perfect one.

Repeated visits to the 21st verse of the first chapter of Matthew had shown us that Christ's coming was not to do certain naturally presumable things. The words poverty, sickness, trouble, temptation and death were not to be found in the passage.

A later investigation was rewarded with an illumination that was almost like a revelation in the sudden notice of the word “sins.” He had come to save His people from their sins. So sin was what He was after.

It is wonderful the mistakes that good people have made here. Few seem to know the true mission of Christ on earth. They seem to think it was to save us from hell, or bring us to heaven, or to be a model and example for us, or to comfort us in trouble. Not one in ten thousand know that Christ ascended from heaven to meet the monster Sin and destroy it wherever it was to be found.

Whatever other beings have striven to do, whatever generals and statesmen and philosophers labored after, Christ's attention and energies were directed upon Sin. His teaching was to expose it, and His power put forth to destroy it. Nothing is more plainly taught in the Scripture, and yet nothing seems to

be so little understood or believed. It seems with many that the Bible declares in vain that “the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

It means not only a great deal, but everything to know what Christ came into the world to do. One’s faith, and purpose, and labors and life are bound to be affected immeasurably by it. Not only attainments along the line of growth, but obtainments in the way of grace are compelled to be decided by a proper view of Christ and the recognition of the scope of His redemption.

Still another visit to the 21st verse brought out another flash light of revelation in the words, “His people.”

So, aside from His sacrificial death for the world, He had a special mission to, and work of grace for His followers.

The thought of such a blessing is distasteful and disturbing to many in the church of God today, who with various reasons and arguments would prove that such a grace is entirely unnecessary. But the fact of the deliverance is put beyond question in this wonderful little verse. Christ evidently has brought a blessing for His people.

A still later visit to the 21st verse brought out a wonderful meaning in the word “from.” For many years we had failed to notice it. If read, it made no impression upon us, anyhow not a deep and lasting one. We had been educated to believe that Jesus saved us in our sins, saved us when we came to die, etc. So the passage in Matthew really and to all purpose read to us that “He should be called Jesus, for He would save His people in their sins.”

The idea of living without sin never dawned upon us. We regarded it as a physical and moral impossibility. We supposed that Jesus came out of heaven into our midst to forgive us and keep forgiving us. That sinning would of course keep on, and the pardoning would move on abreast or follow steadily after. According to this idea, the Savior had mercy enough, but lacked power. He was not able to stop that which the devil had set in motion. He could not root out that which Satan had planted. In plain words, He was less powerful than the Great Enemy.

It constituted an epoch in the writer’s life when he saw the light bursting out of that word “from.”

We saw that “from” did not mean “in,” but the opposite. It showed

separation, disjointing and an utter disconnection. The people of God being saved from their sins (not the consequences of sin) did not touch them at any point. A great gulf and chasm was seen opening up between the child of God and the life of transgression. So great was the division that it was not intended that we should go over to the other. Former meetings and intimacies were utterly broken up. The two were finally parted. The separation was to be for time and eternity.

Truly this was a marvelous blessing to have been hidden from the sight and understanding so long. And yet here it was laid down in this brief utterance of the angel to Mary.

A still later visit of inquiry to the 21st verse was rewarded by a strange new light resting on the word "He." "He will save His people from their sins." In a word, the blessing of holiness is the result of a divine work.

In this simple, quiet statement of the angel, the purgatorial, growth and death theories of purity or holiness are settled forever. It is a divine work, and the work of the second person in the Trinity. "He," that is, Christ does it.

This is just what John the Baptist said, what Paul affirmed, and what the prophets declared long before them both. Malachi, the last of the line, prophesied that "He would purify the sons of Levi," and long afterwards, when this same ascended Savior poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost upon His servants in the upper room, Peter said that at that time their hearts were purified.

Still other lessons and reflections could be drawn from the verse, but enough has been said to vindicate the statement made in the beginning of the chapter concerning the marvelous unfolding power of the Word, and the corresponding depth and opening up of the wonderful salvation of God.

CHAPTER 4

A PERFECT CONSECRATION

It is very evident that many of God's people do not realize the possibility and the actual fact of a perfect, lifetime consecration; a devotement of all to God, which does not need to be patched up, mended, and made over. The idea of many is that the best consecration we can make is an imperfect one; and so with more light, and new conditions arising, it has to be altered and in a sense made over almost every day. If it was a very excellent dedication of self to God, then it may last until next Sunday, or perhaps until the next revival meeting, when it is in order that all the people should come up and consecrate over again.

Hence it is that the first service of every meeting, whether it be church, Epworth League, Christian Endeavor, or Union Services, is expected to be devoted to the consecrating of God's people to the service of God; the thought with all about consecration seeming to be that it is bound to be defective at its best, and so needs to be continually repeated. According to their conception and definition of the duty, it is an imperfect service, and so, being incomplete, of course they have to be working on and improving it all the days of their life.

In blessed contrast to this there is nothing more plainly taught in the Bible, and no experience more real to the mind and soul than that of a perfect consecration. Such a devotement places the whole being on the altar, spirit, soul and body, and for all time and eternity. It surrenders the past to God, yields up the present, and anticipates the future and all that it may hold, whether good or evil. It says not only all I know but all I do not know, I give to God; all I see and all I do not see. Let come what will, whether prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, company or solitude, success or defeat, everything is preempted by an anticipating faith, and sealed with the signet of God.

Any thinking man must see that this is a perfect consecration. The fact that certain things may come up in after life which were not foreseen, or thought of, fails to make it imperfect, because the consecrator anticipated this in the words, "All I do not know." The consecration covered any and every possibility of human life, the free will pledging loyalty to God in every changing circumstance and condition.

There are several profound advantages in such a complete devotement and life abandonment.

First, it puts an end to the continual coming to the altar to get right with God. If consecration is thus presented as a perpetual piece of unfinished business; if it is so faulty and incomplete that every beam of new light brings us up for confession, prayer and amendment, then indeed there is nothing to do but to keep coming. But such a view degrades this exalted duty, and such a course is sure to be hardening to the heart, as well as puzzling and discouraging to sinners. What must men think of that piety which has to be perpetually remended, and that never seems to get to the sticking and staying point?

A man who is under the necessity of publicly pledging devotion and loyalty to his wife every few days has evidently the symptoms of unfaithfulness and disloyalty about him. And so these frequent reconsecrations unmistakably indicate a life that lacks in devotion and steadfastness.

We knew of a preacher who used to make his congregation “come up and consecrate,” as he called it, every Sabbath of the year. He got them so that they reminded one of a drilled company of soldiers. With a simple word, “Come up and consecrate,” and a wave of the hand, here they came moving up with the regularity and precision but also the lifelessness of a machine. The whole thing became common to them, and as a congregation they drifted into a spiritual condition where it became almost impossible to affect them.

The perfect consecration puts an end to this misconception of the holy duty, and so of course saves from the moral hurt and disaster resulting from the misconception

Second, a perfect consecration gives us but one death to die.

A man who has truly and perfectly consecrated; who has devoted all to God and for all time; who has put the future on the altar, with all it contains, in the words “all I don’t know” — such a man understands what crucifixion and death mean.

We hear much talk these days about “a deeper death,” etc. The expression itself is an absurdity. A death is a death, and there cannot be a deeper one. It would be awful for a dying man to be told that after having gasped, struggled and died, he would have to die again and it would be a deeper

death. So it would be poor comfort to a Christian in his throes and struggles with self and sin, to be told that after that agony was over there was still a deeper death awaiting him.

These teachers point to Paul's statement, "I die daily," when these words have not the slightest reference to the sin question, and any true commentator will tell us so.

This "deeper death" teaching is only another way of upholding an imperfect consecration. It supposes that a man cannot place the future on the altar, or cannot consecrate the unknown event, circumstance and possibility to God, when the Bible and human experience prove to the contrary. The soul can say, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way."

John Inskip received the blessing while saying, "Oh, Lord, I am wholly and forever thine." And no one can obtain the grace of holiness who does not say the same or its equivalent.

I thank God it is appointed unto men only once to die. This for the body, and it is also true in regard to sin. He that makes a perfect consecration will have a death that needs not to be repeated.

When, in making my consecration, I laid big churches and high ecclesiastical position upon the altar, I died then and there to these things. So that when, a year afterwards, I was told by a preacher one night at 10 o'clock, while standing under the flickering light of a gas street lamp, that the Board of Stewards in certain large city church were going to have me moved, my quiet reply to the informer was "that I was willing." I had died to this very thing a year before, so that when it was presented months later I did not have to die again. I had died already.

Third, the perfect consecration puts us where we are prepared for everything that transpires.

If the soul is but partly consecrated, we can readily see what struggles and sufferings, what unrest and distress, what adjustment, and readjustments, and what "deeper deaths" are necessary. But he who has surrendered all to God, concerning and connected with himself, is ready to be exalted or abased, to be mistreated or ill treated, to be misunderstood and misrepresented, and yet keep peaceful, rejoicing, and even triumphant through it all.

A preacher told us of a sanctified woman in Iowa who, when trying, untoward and painful circumstances arose and beat upon her, would invariably say, with a sweet, gentle smile and peaceful brow, "Well, amen." She did not have to go off and pray a half hour or an hour to be able to utter this. She had placed life itself, with all its work and worries, with all its mishaps and grievances, upon the altar, and now, as events came, she was ready for them. The spirit of conquest had been given her the moment of her complete consecration. Victory was now in the soul before the battle began.

How such a grace disarms the future of its terrors. We lay ourselves and all of life itself entirely upon the altar, and God in marvelous grace accepts the complete gift, and gives in return a complete grace, by which we are made victors over every changing circumstance of life. Accepted already by a perfect unreserved consecration, when the trials finally appear, we are ready for them. Crowding all the conflicts of life into one great battle called perfect consecration, we find we have fought the Waterloo of the soul, the war is ended, and we retire, so to speak, as a prisoner of grace to St. Helena.

Finally the perfect consecration brings upon the soul the blessing of entire sanctification. The divine work of sanctification fixes, sets and makes permanent the human work of consecration. No one can be perfectly consecrated but a few hours at the farthest before receiving the grace of sanctification.

It is impossible for God to sanctify the soul that is only partially given up to Him. No argument is needed here, because the truth is so clearly apparent. Hence the imperfect consecrator will be forever consecrating and never obtaining anything permanent and satisfying from God. The fire falls on the "whole offering." The whole spirit, soul and body must be presented to God if we would be sanctified wholly and preserved blameless.

This is not all, for no one who is conscious of a single mental reservation, or who is doubtful about faithfulness in the future, can possibly receive the blessing of sanctification. The soul is so constituted that if the heart or conscience condemns, it cannot have confidence toward God, and so cannot come boldly to a throne of grace.

But just as the soul knows when it withholds a mite from God, so it realizes when the last thing is given up. It is conscious of its own integrity. It can put its Isaac on the altar, and know perfectly when he is there. It can accept the strange, untried future as Abraham did the unknown country

upon which he entered at the command of God, and, like that man of faith and obedience, be true to Heaven in every changing circumstance of life.

Thank God for the possibility and the actuality of a Christian making a perfect consecration that brings down upon it the settling, fixing, crowning and divine work and grace of entire sanctification. He who will perform the first will beyond all question possess and enjoy the second.

CHAPTER 5

THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT

The second work of grace is presented in the Bible in many different ways. It seems that, by variety of expression and imagery, God would arouse the attention, appeal to the intellect and convince the understanding of every kind of person. Thus the figure of baptism would strike one; circumcision another; and crucifixion a third class of readers, thinkers and searchers after truth.

In the instance before us the figure used is that of “sealing,” and it is full of blessed suggestions.

One idea is that a letter or epistle has been written already.

The reader will remember that the apostle says that the Christian himself is an epistle; that it is not a handwriting on manuscript and by a pen, but done by the finger of God on the fleshly tables of the heart. He also declares that such life epistles are seen and read of men.

All this was wrought in regeneration, and we who were dark and dreary signboards to hell, became suddenly changed and elevated in conversion to letters of grace written by the hand of God himself. Men not only beheld the transformation, saw we were now epistles, but could also read the heavenly handwriting in us and on us, that declared change of heart, speech, language, life and everything.

The figure of “sealing” used by the apostle naturally reverts the mind to the previous image of the “epistle.” The argument for the second work of grace lies in the simple fact that there must be an epistle or letter before there can be a sealing. The Jews had their rolls of parchment full of their sacred writing. Some of them were sealed, but it stands to reason that the roll had to be written before it could be sealed.

In like manner God wrote upon our hearts. We all felt the writing at conversion, people read it, and it read well. Now after that comes the sealing of the Spirit. The two works are different, writing being one thing and the sealing of what is written another. Moreover, the sealing is bound to follow the writing. It certainly could not precede, and it is equally sure could

not take place at the same moment. The Word itself says: “Seal up the prophecies which are in the Book.”

The assertion of any preacher or layman that he received both works of grace at the same moment, the divine writing and the sealing, is absurd, and as impossible as it is to write a letter and seal it at the same instant. We complete the letter, and then if we seal it at all, it is done after the completion.

A second suggestion by the figure is that a secret has been suddenly brought about by the simple fact of sealing.

Cannot the reader see that the instant a letter is thus closed it becomes a mystery to all outsiders.

In the present time we would say that a letter is written, folded, slipped in an envelope and then sealed. In former days the manuscript was rolled in cylindrical shapes and sealed. In either case the document once open to an investigating eye becomes at once closed and hidden. And one thing is certain, that no matter how plainly and simply a letter is written, yet when the sealing takes place it becomes a mystery to the public. In Scriptural language we can say: “No man knoweth it saving he that receiveth it.”

Nothing is more plainly taught in the Scriptures than the fact that there is a secret of the Lord revealed to a certain class; a mystery of the Gospel hid for ages, but revealed now to saints. Let it be remembered that regenerated people are called saints, and this is something to be revealed to them.

No fact is better known to a number of God’s people than after having been epistles of Christ for years, known and read of men, that when the sealing of the Spirit took place, at once they became, and ever since have been, puzzles and mysteries to the great body of the church and world.

Nor is this all, for as in the case of the letter, so long as the seal continues unbroken, the letter remains a mystery, though it be passed from hand to hand; so no matter how close the relationships of life, nor how intimately we may be thrown together in home, store or street, yet if the Seal of the Holy Spirit is still in us and upon us, we are a puzzle and a mystery to all except those who have been sealed themselves, and know what is meant by the white stone given to the overcomer in the church, and have the stone in which the new name is written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

A third suggestion made by the figure is that a sealed missive is addressed.

In like manner there is a heavenly superscription or external mark upon the life given entirely to God. "To Heaven" is as plainly discerned as any address ever seen upon an envelope in the mail.

It is remarkable how God's work is stamped up the face, while the celestial destination is apparent to any observer.

A fourth thought is that a sealed and directed letter will in good time be delivered.

When such a missive is mailed there is no need to leave home, stand guard over the letter box or run by the side of the train which is carrying it to some distant city. It will arrive there in good time safe and sound, and anxiety, questionings and doubts will not hasten its arrival. The government is pledged that it shall reach its destination, and this is thought sufficient to quiet the apprehensions of all who are interested.

Just as truly as we receive the Sealing of the Spirit, we will be forwarded on highways of spiritual travel and lines of grace to the New Jerusalem. We are told to commit ourselves to the Lord, and he will bring it to pass. We are also assured that He will present us faultless before the Throne. The surrendered life is in His keeping, and no one can pluck us from His hands. He has promised to bring us through trouble and difficulty; through flood and fire; through six troubles and then through the seventh. He will do what He says, for He is faithful that promised, and cannot lie.

If Paul ever had an anxiety about reaching the final blessed destination of the soul, he cast it to the winds in the words: "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day."

Payson on his death bed had such a view of the faithfulness of God that he felt both shame and contrition for his doubts in the past in regard to the final great victory.

The distinctly written and sealed epistle will reach heaven. Some will see long years roll by before they arrive at the Golden City, but they will get there at last. We do not know the Angel Postman who will leave us at the Mansions where we are expected, but we do know that we will reach home at last.

A fifth thought is that when the sealed letter comes to its destination, it is

opened and read.

In like manner there will be a wonderful opening and reading of God's human epistles in heaven. We have seen men gather breathless around, while a letter was thus being made public; but what could we put in a manuscript that could compare in interest to the trials, conflicts, defeats and victories of a redeemed life.

A sixth lesson is that the seals of letters can be broken.

Sometimes we get mail in a damaged condition. A few words stamped in red or blue ink on the envelope tell us that the letter was received in that condition at the office. No one knows who broke the seal and disfigured the direction; all this is a mystery; yet it is evident that somewhere down the road the damage was done.

So the life epistles of Christ can become injured on the road, and, sad to relate, do get hurt. The sight of broken seals and altered addresses in the spiritual life are only too common.

There is this fact, however, about the Christian which makes a sharp and most notable difference between him and a letter written by a human hand. The latter can only be injured by outside forces; it cannot destroy itself; while the former cannot be hurt by any one or anything, without His own consent. The heavenly epistle, strange to say, breaks its own seal, or permits some one else to do it. So the rent envelope or lost experience in the Christian life shows that the "letter" was taken out of the hands of God through the volition and act of the man of God himself.

A final thought is that a broken seal can be renewed.

All that is needed is the flame of a candle, a bit of red sealing wax, the letter lying under the hand, and then a firm blow of the descending signet. Immediately we see once more upon the crimson background the old-time figure of sailing ship, grappling anchor, or flying bird in clearest relief, while the word, "Mizpah," or Some initials known only to two human hearts shine forth under the diagram as though they had never disappeared.

If the Spirit's seal upon the soul is broken, the thing to do and the only thing to do is to fly at once to the Mercy Seat, confess with shame the faithlessness, and plead unbrokenly and persistently for the restoration of the blessing.

Thank God there is enough of the red blood of the atonement left to cover the soul again. The holy fire in heaven has never gone out. The heart, cold and hard as it may seem and feel, can, under the flame of the Holy Ghost, melt and become perfectly plastic again.

May the divine signet fall right now upon that penitent, yielding spirit; the image of Christ be restored to the heart and face; and the superscription "Holiness unto the Lord" stamped so clearly upon the life that it can be read by any and all both in the church and in the world, now and in the everlasting future.

CHAPTER 6

SPIRIT-FILLED

The above expression is becoming much used. It is the inverted statement of a Bible promise and spiritual experience. The Scripture does not say Spirit-filled, but filled with the Spirit.

The two expressions appear to be the same in meaning, and should be the same. They are identical to God and the truly sanctified, but there are some today who have trifled with the word and work of God and made the term to stand for what it cannot do, and for what it certainly is not.

It is not the emotion of a minute or hour, but a divine work resulting in an experience strong and abiding.

It is not simply an overflowing blessing. Many have great measures of grace who are not filled with the Spirit. All of us have witnessed such scenes, and heard people ignorantly say that the man was filled with the Holy Ghost, when he was not, and the subsidence and departure of the blessing a few minutes afterward proved that he was not. All could observe that the individual had undergone no moral change; that his conversation, habits and life were unaltered. He had simply received a refreshing or overflowing blessing from the Lord.

Being filled with the Spirit, as the Scripture teaches, brings about as startling a change in the man's life as regeneration had previously wrought. Moreover, it abides.

In the teaching of Moody, Murray, Meyer and others like them, the filling of the Spirit is an empowering for service, and is presented as a distinct grace or blessing to be sought and received by regenerated people. But according to their theology, it has no purifying or destroying work, but comes down upon the old nature or inbred sin, suppressing it, and at the same time qualifying the man for service. The burglar is not killed, but sat down upon. And now the man of the household sitting upon the prostrate but squirming enemy, proposes from that peculiar position to defy and fight all enemies on the outside.

Such a teaching as this is not only contrary to the Bible, but even makes

God to utter falsehood. If a man has the carnal mind or inbred sin left in him, how can he be filled with the Holy Ghost?

A glass tumbler with a lump of lead in it may have water poured in it until the fluid reaches and overflows the brim, but still the vessel is not filled with water. It would be an untruth to say so. It is full, minus the lead.

In like manner it is false to say a man is filled with the Spirit when carnality or the old nature is left. Neither does God say that he is. God will not utter untruth to please anyone. When He declared that the disciples were filled, He had it put on record that their hearts were “purified.”

Furthermore, any thinker can see that if, as the Northfield and Keswick Schools teach, the filling of the Spirit comes upon the old nature, keeping it down and conquered, a strict regard to truth would cause men to say as they give their experience, “I am filled with the Spirit, save where the old man or old nature inhabits my being.” All this would require the Bible to be altered and the sentence changed to snit the truth, and have it read “partly filled” instead of “filled,” as it now appears in certain famous passages.

To secure this remodeling the word, however, a new edition of the Bible would have to be published in the skies, and before this could be done we would have to convince the Holy Ghost that He had made a mistake in terms and was propagating error.

According to the men and schools we have mentioned, full does not mean full, nor filled, filled. So when Jesus was said to be full of grace and truth, He was only so in part. Likewise it was a mistake to say the disciples were “full of joy” and “filled with the Holy Ghost.”

How delightful it is to turn from wrong teaching and take the Word itself! How refreshing and simplifying to believe the Bible. It is such a deliverance from mental confusion, and windy arguments, to accept the statements of the Word of God and believe that men can obtain a “pure heart,” can be “sanctified wholly” and be “filled with the Spirit.”

It is also very blessed to feel that these things have taken place in our souls and lives, and that we know the carnal mind is gone, the old man dead, and our hearts filled with the Holy Ghost.

The mistake made by the teachers referred to is that they have overlooked the fact that in sanctification or the baptism with the Holy Ghost there is a double work. Just as in justification there is pardon of sin and regeneration

of the nature, so in sanctification there is a purifying of the heart and a filling or empowering.

According to the Scripture there is no distinct lasting work of “empowering” apart from purification. The Spirit has no such single grace. As he comes to fill, he purifies.

It is argued that Christ only spoke of the “empowering” in the first chapter of Acts. But in reply we would remark that He had said a great deal more about purification in the seventeenth chapter of John. In this last named chapter He dwelt upon the first feature of the double work of sanctification, and in Acts He spoke of the second.

When the blessing finally came, and Peter afterwards spoke of it, he said that their hearts were “purified” that day, and we all know that was the hour they were “filled” and “empowered.” So being filled with the Spirit means to be cleansed or purified and then empowered. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the pure heart will bring power.

The blessing comes in answer to prolonged and faithful waiting upon God. It came that way at Pentecost, and the genuine article still cannot be obtained in any other manner. Some people are manipulated, or jump into something which they call the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and they run for a while, and even outrun Cushi, but they are soon set aside, having no real message to deliver, and have to listen themselves to Cushi, who comes the long but regular way by the plain.

Poor Brother and Sister Ahimaaz, who were told by the evangelist that they had the blessing, that they were filled, and so started out without the Holy Spirit witnessing to them that the work had been done.

They took it by faith, which was right enough, but they failed to tarry in the upper Room until the holy fire fell. The disciples had faith, but that very faith kept them waiting until the Holy Ghost came upon them. Christ had said, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” Well for them, and well for the church, and well for the world that they obeyed Him.

They took it by faith, it is true, but they also took good care not to give up praying and looking for the blessing, and not to leave Jerusalem, and not to leave that famous upper chamber until the heavens opened, and suddenly, gloriously, overwhelmingly, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

They took hold of the blessing at once by faith, but believing that faith without works is dead, they held on to God in mighty supplication until the blessed hour came, when the blessing took hold of them. They started out with faith, and ended with faith, knowledge and feeling. They began with a profession and were swept into a possession. They did not believe they were filled, but knew it. They not only knew it, but felt it, and moreover it was seen, known and felt by the world.

CHAPTER 7

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

The blessing which is named in the caption of this chapter was typified centuries before its fulfillment at Pentecost in an occurrence in the Temple of Solomon.

The Scripture tells us that after the completion of the building, the priests and Levites retired, and just as the doors were shut, suddenly the glory of God descended and filled the whole sanctuary. So it is with the human temple. There is a life emptying, a complete withdrawal of self, a closing of the door on the past, then a humble, prayerfully expectant waiting, when suddenly the glory of God fills the soul, and the man knows that he is not only cleansed by the blessed incoming, but filled. We meet a large number in the land who profess this grace, but the lack luster eye, the stern, melancholy face, the absence of spiritual joy and responsiveness show that in their cases self never went out; and if the door was shut, it was not closed to all on the outside; something evidently remained on the inside. When this is the fact, the great deliverance from inbred sin, and the filling of the Holy Ghost never take place. People in such instances may have the profession, but not the possession.

Once in New England a boy was walking along; the road, while a pet pigeon fluttered around and above him. Sometimes the bird was near and again it was at quite a distance. Then it would spring in the air and follow the lad, alighting a few feet from him, only to be left behind again as the boy walked rapidly onward.

I thought this was a fair illustration of the way of the Spirit with some Christians. He follows and flutters about them. The Holy Dove descended upon Christ and was not seen to leave Him. But with most of God's people the alighting and remaining or indwelling is not desired nor allowed. Where it is permitted the evidence of the spiritual occurrence is unmistakable, and just as Christ went from the banks of the Jordan in the power of the Spirit, so will it be with those who are Spirit-filled. Their face, spirit, words, deeds and life will all declare that something has happened. Something of an epochal nature has taken place. There has been a spiritual occurrence which is as notable and real to the Christian as regeneration was to the unconverted.

When Christians, who claim this grace, testify that they have the same “ups and downs,” the same dumbness of tongue, with the old-time uselessness and powerlessness, they show either profound ignorance of the Bible on one hand or a delusion arising from false and incompetent teachers on the other.

We heard of a boy who had been insulated on a stool and so charged with electricity that if any one drew near and extended a hand or finger, sparks would fly from the body of the lad and an electric shock would be instantly felt by the approacher.

We have known people who were so filled with the Holy Ghost that you could not be in their presence a minute without receiving sparks, waves and even shocks of divine power from them.

We recall holy men and women so filled with faith and the Holy Ghost that when they touched people with their hands at the altar where they knelt as penitents and seekers, they would sweep instantly into the blessings of pardon or purity and leap to their feet with radiant faces, and glowing testimony to the work which God had done. Something in the presence and touch of the Spirit-filled servant of God stimulated the faith, fired the soul and caused the mourner to fairly bound into salvation. A worldly girl once witnessed this peculiar power exercised by a consecrated man. As the preacher, with unctuous word and gentle movement of hand, went down the altar, bringing down relief and deliverance to fully half of the weeping line of penitents, that relief being frequently expressed by shouts and cries, the young lady observing it all, said: “I would not let that man touch me for all the world.”

The only point we would make from this little occurrence is that even a woman of the world marked the spiritual influence of which we are writing.

A few months ago we heard a preacher telling of a ship of war which was dispatched with soldiers by the Chinese government to save the lives of a number of missionaries that were in jeopardy in a province where there had been an uprising against them. The vessel had hundreds of miles to go from one harbor to another, and but little time to do it in. A speedy arrival meant the salvation of the lives of a number of innocent men and women, while delay meant their torture and death.

A gentleman who was on board said that all steam was crowded on, oil was poured on the fuel, the fires roared and crackled in the furnace, and the

vessel fairly leaped through the waves. He said that the flames streamed from the big smoke stacks in the day, and at night they looked like long scarlet banners. Every timber creaked, the engines groaned and throbbed like mighty monsters under the deck, the whole ship shook and trembled as if in mortal agony, and the speed made was phenomenal.

At the end of the trip, the castings were discovered to be burned out, leaks had sprung, and the vessel, injured in many ways, had to go into the docks. But the beautiful blessed point of the narrative was that she got into port in time to accomplish her mission and save the lives of scores of noble men and women. It was certainly blessed to go to pieces in such a work.

As we consider this illustration and apply it to the spiritual life, we can see the ground for the old proverb, "It is better to burn out than to rust out." Better to go into the dock for repairs from such an achievement than to be tied up clean and white at the wharf. There is a great gap and difference between a dock and a wharf.

When we see Spirit-filled men and women we think of that war vessel burning its glorious way across the sea. Time, personal ease and comfort, and all else is disregarded in the endeavor to get souls saved. Many call the flaming life one of misguided zeal, pronounce the whole work of the man suicidal, and prophesy gloomy things. Perhaps some do shorten their lives, or break down nervously from an over-taxed brain and body. They may cut short their days on earth or may be invalidated, superannuated, or shelved, so to speak, from the old-time active labors. In other words, they may be put in the docks. But then they did something before they got there. They did not remain at the wharf criticizing ships that went to sea. They were not in the holiday business of church picnics, and singing and speechifying conventions. They went out to save immortal souls from an endless death, and did it. They got there on time and in time. They warred against the devil and defeated him. They won amazing victories. They got the souls they sailed after. They may be now broken down from the work, but they did something before they broke down. They may be in the docks for repairs, but they are there not because of inaction, but action. They did not rust out, but burned up. They did not rot at the wharf, but beaten by wind and billow, and riven by shot and shell they sailed into the dock followed by the blessings and prayers of thousands whom they had found, and saved by bringing them to the Son of God.

CHAPTER 8

THE REJECTION OF THE SPIRIT

It seems to the writer that a great part of the Christian church is doing today to the Holy Ghost what the Jewish church did two thousand years ago to the Son of God. There was a rejection in both cases. The only difference being that the Jews rejected the Second Person in the Trinity, while today many Christians are refusing to accept the Third Person. In the first instance they would not have pardon and salvation through Christ, and in the latter case they will not receive holiness or sanctification as the gift of the Holy Ghost. Not more certainly did the Savior stand, and offer his saving, justifying grace to the Jews, than that the Holy Spirit has stood and offered the blessing of holiness, or sanctifying grace, to God's people today. And not more certainly was Christ doubted and cast off by the great body of Israel, than that the Holy Ghost with His offer of heart cleansing, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, or entire sanctification, is disbelieved and rejected by the majority of Christian churches in our land today. It is a fearful thing to refuse the call of God, to steel the heart to His movements of grace and mercy, and, above all, deliberately to reject Him. He has a way of making a nation, church, or individual feel all its dreadfulness before He is done with them. He tells us that when men deny Him, He can and will deny them; that when He calls and they mock, that the time will come when they will call and He will mock. All this is laid down in dreadful sentences in Jeremiah. He speaks of giving up a people whom He had tried to win, pronounces their doom, utters the word "woe" over them, and declares that their house is left unto them desolate.

The old world rejected the Father, and the flood rolling miles deep, a vast winding sheet over the destroyed race, showed that a God of mercy could also be a God of immovable judgment. The Jews rejected the Second Person in the Trinity, the Son of God, and now look at the scattered nation, their poverty-stricken land today. They themselves feel they are under judgment. But their unspeakable sufferings for two thousand years, and all their wailings about the Temple every Friday, have failed to open the heavens above them, and cause God to deliver them from their sorrows, trials, persecutions and deaths. That was a dreadful thing they did on Calvary. That was a fearful cry they raised in Jerusalem, "Away with Him — crucify Him."

Many of God's people are grieving away the Spirit of God from their hearts and from their churches. They will not believe He can sanctify wholly; they will not seek or accept the blessing; and they will not even hear the doctrine preached. Some laugh, some sneer, others get angry, and still others, with cold, hard faces, say, "I want none of it."

It may seem a little thing, and yet a horrible deed has been done. The Holy Ghost has been denied, resisted and put to shame. There are no immediate outward signs to declare the enormity of the offense. Just as we doubt not the sun shone bright and clear on Jerusalem when the Savior wept over it and said, "Your house is left unto you desolate," so, when men sin against and sin away the Holy Ghost, the days come and so, the church bells ring out, the birds sing on, the waters sparkle in their usual channels; and yet a grievous, shocking and terrible act has transpired, and it is a deed that is certain to bring its direful consequences.

As we have been able to understand the Bible and see what is calamity indeed, we are convinced that it would be better to undergo the woe of the antediluvian world which came from the rejection of Jehovah, or bear the trouble that has befallen Palestine and her people for the rejection of the Savior, than to have come upon us the blackness, deadness and ruin which result from the aggrieved departure of the Holy Ghost. No other woe needs to be added, for this is the greatest of calamities.

The Spirit's departure may be gradual. And it is unquestionably seen to have taken place in various degrees in certain human lives, with an equally unmistakable movement to something beyond, far more dreadful. Hell is the last and deepest expression of this spiritual woe, where souls are eternally given up by the Spirit. The work of the Holy Ghost has ended forever. His presence has been taken away forever. The man who begins to resist, grieve and quench the Spirit has put his foot on the top of a descending stairway, whose last step is in perdition itself. He is at the head of the toboggan slide of damnation; an inclined plane down which millions have slipped and plunged into utter and everlasting ruin; the time elapsing between the first stumble and the final fall being explained by the temporary contritions and amendments of the man, and the faithful strivings and oppositions of the Holy Ghost Himself.

From the partial to the complete rejection of the Spirit there are successive losses all along the way. They are so many that to amplify at all would require another chapter.

To the convicted who fight against the truth of holiness comes the loss of

light itself. After faithful striving, the Spirit leaves the man in his unbelief. He is allowed to go into delusion and believe in a lie as he would not believe in the truth. It is perfectly amazing to hear and read of the notions men fall into and advocate about sanctification or holiness after they have turned from the Bible statement. It matters little now what book you put into their hands, or whether they come to a holiness campmeeting or not, all conviction has gone from them, for the Spirit has taken away the light.

Another departure of the Spirit from the soul is seen in the loss of tenderness. A man can become so intolerant and abusive that the Spirit will cease to publicly endorse him, and yet he will feel convinced that he is set for the mangling and crushing in a sense of all who do not agree with him. He began with Jesus, but has wound up with Jehu for a master. But just as the holiness fighter does not imagine the Spirit has left him, so this holiness defender does not dream that he has suffered a loss of the Spirit, and parted with the sweetness and gentleness of Christ. To him the words of Christ were not, "Put up thy sword," but, "Take up a sword; also a sling and battleaxe."

We can understand how a parent would ask a friend to bring his son home who had gone away. But we cannot conceive how that friend could maim and stab and shoot the poor fellow, and yet look for the approval of that boy's father. Here is a parable. Anyhow the intolerant Christian, if he persists in that course, loses a beautiful gift of the Spirit. He remains orthodox, but he cannot win men when the tender melting love once given by the Holy Ghost is withdrawn.

A third departure of the Spirit is seen in blunted spiritual and moral sensibilities. carelessness of speech, harsh judgments, imperfect obedience to God, and trifling with temptation and sin will bring this loss.

In this state it is possible to do things without suffering, which occasioned disturbance and pain in holier days. He can easily detect flaws in others, but can see nothing reprobable in himself.

Other departures of the Spirit we notice without enlarging upon in the words:

Loss of the old, constant, inward gladness;
 Loss of liberty;
 Loss of joy in testimony;

Inability to give the rich, spiritual laugh of other days;

Loss of unction in speeches;
 Loss of power in prayer;
 Loss of power in preaching.

Now let the man endeavor as he will, yet what can he do with these blessed endowments gone? They were his glory and power; what has he now?

We have seen men all unconscious of this stripping. We have seen others who realized it, and knew that more was gone than we have mentioned.

The distressing feature in the first case is the man's perfect helplessness to do anything in the spiritual life, and yet his ignorance of his weakness; and the melancholy fact in the other instance is the difficulty with many and failures of many more in getting back where they once were.

As we have marked the tears, heard the groans, and listened to confessions of spiritual impotency, and inability after months and years of prayer to recover what was once possessed and enjoyed in the Holy Ghost, we have felt more profoundly than ever that it is a fearful thing to grieve away the Spirit of God.

When any congregation or denomination refuses to hear and obey the Holy Ghost; when they turn from the offer of the Holy One to purify, fill, possess and lead them, such churches might as well prepare for their death and burial.

There is not a department of the church which can get along without the Holy Ghost, from the steward's meeting up to the pulpit. If He is received with the full salvation which He brings, every problem will be solved, and success and victory will be beheld everywhere. Empty pews will be filled; life, power and unction will be seen and felt in every service; the sermons will be food for God's people and thunderbolts for the wicked; salvation will flow; conversions and sanctifications will continually take place; accessions will multiply; finances will pour in with no effort or trouble; and the glory of God will be upon that church, as the pillar of fire used to rest upon the Tabernacle.

When the Spirit of God is ignored, His Word contemned, His offer of purity and power despised, He leaves such a church. The word in leaving might well be, "Now see what you can do without me."

We do not have to wait long, or look far to see the unprofitableness,

helplessness, lifelessness and ruin of such churches. When the Holy Ghost withdraws, prayers cease to rise and prevail, the singing is lifeless and formal, the sermons are flat, juiceless and powerless, the service without unction, and salvation is at an end.

Men may continue to come together in the regular form of worship, but God does not appear. They can have union meetings, but they are manifest failures without the Holy Spirit. Men can hold protracted services, but it takes the Holy Ghost to give a revival. Men can furnish electric lights, sawdust, platforms, singing bands and fine speakers, but the Holy Ghost alone can awaken conscience, break stony hearts, put awful conviction on the people, and pour salvation free and full upon the penitents and seekers, whom He has driven by scores, sobbing, weeping and praying, to the altar.

Alas for the congregation, alas for the church which has grieved away the Spirit, who is the author of Pentecost, the inspirer of every true revival, the unfolder of the Bible, and the applier of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ to the wounded, sin-sick soul.

We may try to make up for His absence by brilliant sermonizing, operatic singing in the choir, Chautauqua exercises in the Epworth League, and social, festive and culinary gatherings in the church parlors and dining-room; but God is not there and salvation is not there. All these makeshifts and makebelieves, the address, the concert, the reception, the ice cream festival, the magic lantern exhibition, and all the other trumpery and whatnots of a spiritually dead congregation — all these are brought forward to conceal and make up for the vital loss within. But it fails even to deceive the world itself. It is felt to be paint on the cheek of a consumptive; a bunch of roses on a dead body; or ivy creeping over a crumbling ruin.

CHAPTER 9

THE LOSS OF THE SPIRIT

There is nothing more plainly taught in the Bible than the final departure of the Spirit of God from the human soul. If no such awful calamity could take place to the individual, or to a people, then such inspired utterances as “Quench not the Spirit,” and “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” would be unexplainable and senseless.

The great spiritual calamity held up repeatedly in the Word of God is that there is a moment when the Holy Ghost ceases His work with the resisting, sinful soul, and leaves that soul to its certain coming destruction, whether it be near or far off. The word was never more solemnly pronounced in other days over a people, “Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,” than it is said today, and as dreadfully carried out.

The Spirit of God can be forever lost. This is the dark, frowning, towering cliff or sea wall of despair, against which waves of human effort dash and sing up their white arms in utter impotency. This is the dead line concerning which prophets and apostles warned. And this is the moral state which can be reached in this life, and where the man is as certainly lost as if he was already in the pit.

One fearful feature about this state is that the person himself does not realize it. He, of all others, has the least concern about his condition. He has already reached the point of indifference and spiritual deadness which declares the divine forsakenness or departure. The man with whom God still strives has mental and spiritual pangs. The Spirit-left soul is without yearning for a better or holy life, has no penitence over misconduct, is joined to his idols, and therefore “let alone,” and is a God-forsaken man.

Just as when Christ stood over Jerusalem and pronounced, with tears, its desolation and downfall, the day doubtless was bright and clear, the sunshine sparkled, the brook Kidron gleamed on its way, the beautiful buildings nestled in groves, the temple towered in majesty, the bright-robed people thronged the streets, the soldiers lined the great walls of the city; no sign of the awful woe upon it, and yet it was hopelessly doomed! So the man given up of God may be allowed to move about and lie down in the midst of material abundance, when at the same time he is a lost man. He

may crunch daily mercies between his teeth and grow round and fat with good living; even as in the animal world there is no indication that the throat and knife will get acquainted by Christmas, and an epitaph soon be written in red blood on the white snow.

An unusually good breakfast brought into the cell of the man condemned to be hung that morning is no evidence that the execution will not take place. On the contrary, it is a strange, sad proof that death is near. Sheriff, jailer and attendant are all pitiful on this last morning, and heap up the plate high. So God, looking at a man who will not have spiritual blessings, but chooses the flesh and material mercies instead — this God, pitiful even here, seems to say: He will not have Me and My salvation, and he will soon be cut off forever from all physical and material blessings, let him have abundantly what he prefers now; heap his plate high. He prefers idols, let him be joined to them without interruption.

The full calamity of the loss of the Spirit of God cannot be seen in this life. Men can trail ivy over the ruin. The inward emptiness and desolation may not be known by outsiders. Moreover, the man himself has much in life to prevent his realization of the utter woe that has come upon him. Travel, the social life, literature, music, amusements, business and many other things can divert the mind from the contemplation, as well as recognition of the spiritual calamity within. When the soul leaves the body and enters eternity alone, and is forever separated from these diverting things of earth, it will then know, with a horror and pain indescribable, what it is to be forsaken of God. The symbolic representation of the soul's condition then and forever is seen in the terms, "the undying worm," and "the flame that is not quenched." Hell thus becomes the highest and last, as well as the most dreadful experience of a soul forsaken of God.

Of course the loss of the Spirit does not take place at once on earth. Because of the pity, mercy, love and long-suffering of God, it is a gradual departure.

With the sinner who is convicted a number of times, the striving is felt less frequently, and with less force each time. While he, in his ignorance, is congratulating himself on the ease and growing unconcern with which he puts aside and throws off the voices of conscience and the church, the influence of the Word and the Spirit, yet it is the unequivocal sign that God is gradually leaving him.

With the Christian who comes into a similar woe, the signs are unmistakable, and the divine departure is also gradual. As we have seen the mist in little tongues and patches finally cover a whole field, so we have

seen the spirit of the world get back into the people of God. As the light fades by imperceptible degrees out of the west, so the Holy Ghost seems to withdraw from the soul.

There is first a loss of joy, a conscious lessening of power, a lack of freedom, and a ceasing in the heart of the old-time bubbling gladness. Then comes the cutting down of prayer, neglect of the Bible, criticism and faultfinding. Later on, harshness and censoriousness, with reascendance of uncurbed appetites, renewal of irritability, and the cherishing of wrongs and grudges.

It took months and perhaps years to bring all this about, but it happened at last. The face becomes dark and hard, the voice hollow, while the prayer, testimony, exhortation or sermon falls flat and powerless on the ears of the family or congregation.

Persistence in this condition can bring on a state still more dangerous and lamentable, and that is the utter taking away of the Spirit. In such a case, Saul winds up among the fortunetellers and spiritualists, Balaam dies in the midst of a piece of devilry, and Judas puts the rope around his neck and takes a leap in the air.

Just as dreadful is the sight of one who does not end in any one of these three ways, but in his deadness and uselessness reminds one of a wreck cast up on the beach. Such a vessel makes no other voyages. It sails no more. It simply rots in the sunshine on the shore with croaking sea birds on its broken masts and decaying spars. The steam is gone, and the sail vanished. It is an internal wreck as well as an eternal ruin. As for the captain who directed, the pilot who steered, and the crew which manned the yards and cast the anchor all are gone. There is nothing left now but to gradually fall to pieces, and be swept finally out of sight by the tide.

A wrecked and forsaken ship is no more palpable a sight than the vision in life of men once used of God and moving about continually under His directing voice, now beached high and dry, the fires all out, the hold empty, the deck lonely, the Captain of their salvation departed, and nothing left but the creaking of nervous cordage and the flap and croak of dark winged spirits, roosting in or perching on the life.

This great calamity is begun and led up to by certain conduct on the part of the man, and called in the Bible "grieving the Spirit."

This can be done at first by inattention to the inward teachings and

movements of the Holy Ghost in our behalf. Graver still is the steady resistance to His calls and drawings.

Men who are honest and will confess the truth are bound to admit that when they thus refuse to be led by the Spirit, there comes at once a darkness to the mind and deadness to the soul.

When the Spirit makes duty clear, or brings light upon doctrine and experience, we must at once discharge the duty, seek the experience, or in a word, walk in the light, or He will withdraw Himself, and the coming woe of complete forsakenment is brought fearfully nearer.

Still graver is direct, open and even defiant disobedience to what is the Spirit's will concerning our actions and lives.

It is a fearful thing to say No, when the Holy Ghost says Yes; and to say Yes when He says No. It is so grave that some people seem never to get over it. A few of them are polished up in different ways, but there is an appearance in the eye, voice and manner that declares the existence of an unhealed wound on the inside.

Finally, the Spirit is grieved by actual, flagrant sin. From the nature of the case, nothing can so speedily and effectually "quench the Spirit," especially with those who have walked with God, as persistence in wrongdoing.

As water repeatedly dashed upon a blazing torch diminishes the flame, lessens the heat, brings it down to a single tongue of fire, then to a coal, then to a single spark, and last to the coldness and darkness of an extinguished fagot, so sin can thus affect the energy, warmth, light and at last the lingering presence of the Holy Ghost. He can in a sense be extinguished in the soul. He can be grieved away, quenched, driven out, put out, and the human life which once flamed, glowed and burned with His glorious indwelling presence can become cold, lusterless, lifeless and useless a poor, dead human fagot, not burned up, but put out; not distinguished but extinguished.

From my hotel window in a city of New Mexico, I saw on the horizon fourteen miles away, the craters of three burned-out volcanoes. As I thought how several centuries back they had reddened the skies with flames that burned in their breasts, and how they cast forth great stones and made the whole country shake for miles around, and now beheld them cold, black, dead in the dim distance, their fires all out, their power departed, their craters filled with a wild scrubby undergrowth, and now only a lair and bed

for prowling animals, and a roosting place for night birds, I felt I had seen a sermon if I had not heard one, of the most solemn and memorable character.

So have we seen men filled with the Spirit lighten the country with the fire which burned in their souls, and shake the whole land with the God-given power which they possessed. Then have we seen the fires cool, the heat decrease, the power depart, and after that a spectacle on the platform, in the pulpit and in the pew, that strongly and strangely reminded us of the burned-out volcanoes leaning against the horizon of New Mexico, with their hearts turned to ice, and their breasts the home of flapping night birds, and the resort of snapping and growling wild beasts.

May God in mercy save us from the unspeakable loss of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 10

SOUL YEARNING FOR REST

We are told that there is a belt of meteoric stones flying around the sun in a certain orbit. It is this vast and restless procession that our earth runs across every thirty years or more, and we call them falling stars. Having come out from the sun, they will be forever in disturbed movement as long as they are separated from him. To fall back into the bosom of the great orb from which they come is their only possibility of rest.

In like manner human souls made by God, and coming out from Him, can only find peace and contentment in Him. Life as we see it in the unsaved masses of men is nothing but an endless procession after rest. We cross the path of the unconverted, pick up some of the stragglers, and know what all of them must sooner or later find out, that there is no calm for the soul but in God.

The very restlessness we see in men, their unsatisfied coming and going, their rushes in every direction for pleasure, declare the longing for something not yet possessed.

Much of the traveling we see is simply an endeavor to find peace by change of locality. Whiskey drinking on the part of men, and morphine eating upon the part of women, is another vain effort for satisfaction by drowning present care in liquor or opiates. A good deal of novel reading of the sensational sort is also to be understood and explained in this same light. Even the luxurious house-building and furnishing of today reveals an additional mistake of seeking to meet the cravings of the spirit with comforts that are purely material.

God calculates on this very longing of the soul for rest, to draw it to Him. But men seem to learn this lesson last, that God only can tranquilize and satisfy. If the three hundred and sixty degrees around the horizon should each represent a door, we would see many knocking at every door for spiritual contentment and heart happiness before looking up to Him, who alone can give such things.

In regeneration partial rest is found. New, sweet and blessed is the change from darkness to light, and from the slavery of sin to the service of God.

But there are fluctuations, ebbings, and inner commotions and storms in the converted life that are not compatible with perfect rest. There are cries still left in the soul and hands reaching out for perfect spirit-rest, and the Bible declares that such can be had only through Jesus Christ.

Many of us wronged the Redeemer here for years. We thought that the experience we possessed in justification and regeneration was the best He could do. We were almost persuaded once, that our hope was only, to be realized in the graveyard and in heaven.

Meantime the Lord did not leave us to ourselves, in this mistaken judgment of His salvation, and provision for the present longings and needs of the heart. So He sent many things into our lives to arouse us to see and then receive what He has even in this life for them who love Him. One thing He used with the writer was an elderly woman who in the face of every kind of sorrow and trial wore a gentle, patient, even joyful smile on her luminous countenance that nothing could remove. Her husband was trifling, her children brought her great grief, her house was about to be sold over her head, bitter poverty came in upon the family, ill health attacked her body, and yet we never saw her become impatient, utter a murmuring word, or lose that peaceful smile. Her very eyes seemed to speak of a calm way down in her soul that was too deep to be fathomed. She told us that it was fathomless and that Christ gave it.

This woman's face was like a signboard pointing steadily in a certain direction where God wanted us.

Another thing used of God in our case was a hymn we heard sung one night by several hundred people. The singers were a choral band used in a great evangelistic meeting. We do not know the name of the religious song, and could not catch its words; but the strain itself was the instrument of God used to declare some things to the soul. It seemed to tell of a life altogether surrendered to God, but misunderstood, abused, and rejected like Christ. Under the strange interpreting power of the melody we could see the lonely man battling for the truth, and keeping sweet in spirit and true to duty and God through every kind of assault and temptation. Suddenly the strain swept out from the minor chords into a perfect burst of triumph. There was a tempest of voices on the platform, but under a practiced leader it was a storm of melody, and through it all was presented to the mind the picture of the man who had struggled so hard, getting home at last. Amid the rejoicing of angels, the shouting of the redeemed, and the smile of the Lord, the victor over all earth's woes could be seen fairly staggering into heaven and falling at the feet of the Son of God, who, descending the steps of

glory, lifted him up, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The writer, sitting in a dark corner of the vast hall, heard a voice in the hymn which was not heard by all, and beheld a picture which was not seen by everybody. He felt that the Savior had touched the song and made it open as it did for the sake of the hungry soul in the audience. Then and there the listener saw the life that can be hid with Christ in God, and that in the midst of the wrath of man, strife of tongues, and every storm of life, be kept in perfect peace.

A third thing used of God was the shout of a preacher. He was a holiness preacher, and had been sent for to present a full gospel to a prominent church in a large old Southern city. Morning after morning and night after night the messenger of God faithfully declared the truth, and opened up the wonderful doctrine and experience of holiness obtained by consecration and faith and prayer. But the people did not want it. They cared not for the deep things of God. So there were listless ears, and resisting hearts that like a wall seemed to throw back the balls and arrows of truth. One day in a morning service we were all on our knees, when suddenly the preacher referred to gave a shout that went to every heart. It was not a throat shout, but a soul cry, and pierced every breast, while tears were made to rush to all eyes.

Glancing up we saw him with his face as white as marble, eyes closed, while the countenance was uplifted. The blessing upon him was so great that the blood seemed to have receded upon the heart, and left the face colorless. He evidently had no thought of where he was, while those moving cries continued to fall from his lips. Every person in the audience seemed to go all to pieces under his voice. It sounded in a spiritual sense so far off, so close to heaven, so near to God, that people wept convulsively under it. We saw at once what had happened, — that God, seeing how His servant had been treated, quietly touched him and called him away to the top of an exceeding high mountain of glory. It was as though He had said, "My son, they do not believe you. They do not want what you are preaching about. They do not want even to hear you. Come up here to me, and talk with me awhile." And so God caught him away from us, and, like Moses, he seemed to be seeing God, and speaking with Him face to face, while we in a kind of judgment were left in the plain.

That lonely, faraway and yet rapturous shout convinced me of the "higher life," the "deeper rest," in a word the blessing of entire sanctification, where the soul gazes upon Christ, feeds on Him, and is perfectly delighted with

and satisfied in Him.

We remember that we fell upon our face and with bitter sobs cried out, “Oh, Lord, I want to get up there where he is.” And a sweet, gentle voice whispered in the heart, “You can come.” And we came.

CHAPTER 11

CONDITIONS OF ENTERING

The instant that Christ died, we are told in the Scripture that the veil of the Temple was rent. For centuries it had hung between the Holy and Holiest of the Temple or Tabernacle, declaring by its presence that something in the way of grace was hidden from the people of God. When Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished," and bowed His head and died, this veil was not torn down, but rent from top to bottom. The edges of the severed curtain, hanging together and so still hiding something, taught that there remained a mystery of holiness beyond; while the rent itself, according to Paul, signified that the way into the Holiest was now open.

With all this divine provision for admission, the apostle as quickly noticed certain other conditions which must be observed if we would enter the Holiest, or, in other words, obtain the blessing of entire sanctification.

One of the requisites is stated in the words, "Our bodies washed with pure water."

Here is a symbolical reference to regeneration. As the priests washed at the laver before entering the first or outer room in the Tabernacle, so must we be cleansed with the washing of regeneration to be candidates for admission into the inner sanctuary.

The unconverted man cannot receive the experience of holiness. The backslider must seek the cleansing laver again if he would know the mystery of the Gospel. Nothing unclean passes over that holy way.

Men may deride and belittle the second work of grace, but when the time of seeking the grace has come, and the hour of disputing has departed, they will discover that the great spiritual boon is to be had only with a great price; that it is while walking in the light as He is in the light, that then and there the blood cleanses; that after abstaining from all appearance of evil, the promise is that God will sanctify us wholly.

A second requisite or condition is the possession of a good conscience.

It is a remarkable fact that we can get nothing from God with an accusing

heart. The sense of inward reproof and condemnation coming from our own souls utterly prevents us from believing or receiving. As John puts it, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart." Then he adds, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

The statement is wonderful and yet natural. Many from experience have found it true, and can say with an immovable certainty that it is impossible to obtain spiritual blessings of any kind while the conscience bears testimony to unrectified conduct. The faith faculty seems to be paralyzed, all upward soarings of the soul cease, and all expectancy from God ends when there rests upon the heart the memory of unrighteous things which we fail to confess to God or make right with men.

On the contrary, the spirit fairly bounds upward and Godward when conscious of its own integrity.

The thing buried under the tent has not only a marvelous way of sapping strength and destroying joy, but of sweeping away true boldness and courage. Let it be dug up, surrendered to God, and devoted to destruction with the cordial consent of mind and heart, and the man in a moral sense is transfigured.

We used to marvel at listless prayers, and the sluggishness of people who never seemed able to get anything from God. But we do so no longer. The difficulty in nine cases out of ten is located several feet under a tent. They walk anxiously around a certain neighborhood, their eyes repeatedly rove in that direction, the voice has an uncertain ring, and it is manifest that all is not well within.

Meantime God is greater than our heart. What wisdom is in this simple expression! He waits for us to say I have done all, before He does His all. We must sanctify before He sanctifies.

A third requisite mentioned by Paul is "a true heart."

We get light on this word by looking at objects and persons that suggest or illustrate the fact of steadfastness, devotion, etc. So we are accustomed to speak of a faithful wife, who, in long absences of the husband, is true to his memory and interests, who keeps him in mind, who sends him frequent letters of loving remembrance and counts the days to his return.

Then a polarized needle is faithful. With all its shakings and tremblings occasioned by hands outside, the arrow is in wild unrest until it points again

to its star, and then it settles down into peace because in harmony with a vast orb billions of miles away.

Many persons who seek sanctification impress us as not having the “true heart.” Not only fitful seeking and variable moods show this, but the different way they act under changed circumstances. For instance, in a morning meeting, where the atmosphere is deeply spiritual and only Christians are present, they will come to the altar, but at the night service, where worldly acquaintances and unbelieving members of the family are in the audience, they sit like fixtures in the pews. They talk freely of their belief in the blessing with the friends of holiness, but change their spirit and conversation when situated among the opposers of sanctification.

Again, they seek ardently for the blessing for a few hours, and then allow themselves to fall in a listless and idle state. Everything declares that the true heart is not here. Nothing here to remind one of the patient, loyal, devoted wife and nothing to suggest that almost pathetic movement of the compass needle which is all tremulous and distracted until it points faithfully to its beloved North.

We once saw a young man seek the blessing of sanctification in one of our Southern towns. At the close of the morning service at noon, when others left the church for their homes he remained kneeling at the altar. A small group of friends lingered for a while, but they soon departed. The sister of the young man, with full eyes and heart, knelt near him, but as the housekeeper of her father’s home was also compelled to withdraw. In the afternoon some one passing the church glanced through the half-closed door and saw the faithful seeker still in the same place and position. Near the close of the day people in going by saw the same patient figure bowed at the altar, while the shadows of the evening were filling the building. At six o’clock a small company gathered for a prayermeeting; and in consideration of the solitary one at the chancel, held a brief service in the other end of the church, and prayed in whispers. In great sympathy and tenderness their eyes fell upon the distant form that they found bowed in prayer when they entered, and which they had left engaged in silent supplication to God.

When the congregation began to gather, at half-past seven, the young man was still seen at the altar with body and face bowed as if in utter forgetfulness of every earthly being. Just as the first hymn was being sung, his faith culminated, the power came down, the veil was rent for him, and with a glad cry the faithful seeker of seven hours entered into the Holiest. He came in with “a true heart.”

A third condition is “full assurance of faith.”

Here is not only faith, but faith at its best and strongest. No shadow of doubt is allowed to fall upon the mind. No question of God’s word is permitted to arise in regard to the divine ability and willingness to perform the work and grant the blessing. The still more important fact that God receives and sanctifies even now, is believed in and clung to as one would hold to a great rock in the midst of a flood of waters.

In “full assurance of faith” is the language of Paul. Just as a person goes confidently into a room to meet one who is awaiting him there; just as he passes over the threshold and through the door without a single doubt that the wife he expects is there; so in like manner, yes in greater confidence, in full assurance of faith, we part with our hands the rent curtain, and walking boldly into the Holiest, instantly realize the incoming of Christ into the purified and exulting soul, and find the blessing we have been craving all the days of our life.

CHAPTER 12

POSSESSING THE LAND

It was one thing for the Jews to cross over the Jordan into Canaan, and another thing altogether to possess the land. Years after their entrance Joshua said to them, "Why are ye so slack to possess the land?" They had overrun a portion, but there were numbers of lofty hills and mountains, beautiful valleys and fruitful plains which they had not scaled, explored and cultivated.

In like manner it is one thing to obtain the blessing of sanctification, and it is another to enter upon its many privileges and full blessedness.

As we study the sanctified people today we find them divided into three classes: First, those who have crossed the Jordan years ago, but have never left its banks. They use the same expressions, have no better experience than that of the first day or week, and are, so to speak, camping in the same place. These are the ones who are continually slipping into the Jordan, and getting washed back to Moab. They have to be picked up and dried, and ferried back to Canaan every summer at some camp-meeting.

A second class are those who have crossed and gone some distance into the experience, when suddenly, after a few years, they stop and never advance again. The whole case is full of mystery to many, but the explanation is that something has been buried under the tent, and God will go up with them no more to battle. They have stopped short in the midst of a life all aglow; and though years have passed they go no deeper nor farther into holiness. Sermons, books, papers and meetings which they continue to read and attend seem powerless to bring back the glory, and restore that wonderful push and go in their lives which once everybody most plainly beheld. Like the first class the question could very properly be asked of them "Why are ye so slack to possess the land?"

A third class sweep on and over the whole of Canaan. They scale the mountains of joy, penetrate its valleys of rest, drink of its rivers of pleasure, and till its plains of duty. They allow no spiritual fruit to go untasted, and own the country from Dan to Beersheba, or, in other words, enter upon and enjoy the experience in all its wideness and fullness.

They possess the land, we say. What does this mean, what is it to possess the land?

In general terms it means that there should be a steady advancement on all spiritual lines; that there should be an ever-deepening experience; that there should be a continual growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; and that the fruits of the Spirit which were brought over into the Canaan life should become larger, better and more luscious; that just as Canaan was a better country for fruits than the wilderness, so the sanctified heart should be a better soil for the Christian graces, than when that same heart had in it the stone of inbred sin.

But to particularize. If we are in the Canaan experience we should enjoy a deeper peace.

We can understand how a person on an ocean steamer would in the first few days feel decidedly nervous, but when the vessel has for days carried one over billows and through fierce storms, that anxiety should give way to deep confidence and even tranquillity. So we can understand how at first people who enter upon the experience of holiness feel some apprehension about the keeping power, and as to what the future holds for them. But when for days and weeks they discover that this peculiar grace of God is sufficient for every condition, that it preserves and upholds in all circumstances of life, then the natural result should be a profound and ever-deepening peace.

Second, there should be an increasing sweetness of spirit.

One of the things promised in Canaan was honey. This stands for the tender loving spirit the blessing brings. Now as the land was said to flow with honey, then it follows that the deeper one goes into the country the more of this beautiful liquid treasure should be found. In a word, the sanctified should steadily become sweeter spirited as the years roll on.

We do not mean a sickening sweetness; nor a namby-pamby, mawkish sentimentality and softness. Not molasses, but honey. The real, genuine sweetness of Christ in the soul.

Think of a man starting out with a beehive, and after twenty years having still only one. He should have had at least an hundred, and the industrious man would have owned that number. Certainly we ought not to be put to shame by an individual running a bee farm. When we see sanctified people becoming vinegary we fear that they are already out of Canaan and back in

the wilderness. And when they grow bitter we have reason to dread that they are still farther back and are in the gall of Egypt. Truly, if we possess the land, we who began with a single hive of honey should in a few months or years have enough in the shape of love, gentleness, kindness, pity and sympathy for a whole community.

Third, there should be a profounder joy.

One of the promised fruits of Canaan was grapes. The land was said to be one of vineyards, while the presses burst out with wine. Wine is a Bible figure for spiritual exaltation and joy. The teaching then in the imagery is, that just as one going deeper into Canaan would find more vineyards and wine, so, in the Sanctified life there should ever be an increasing soul gladness. Instead of drying up, our heart presses should burst forth with new joys and fresh spiritual rapture.

He would be a poor gardener who set out a grape plant, and after ten years had no more than he began with. The hillsides should have been covered with a beautiful increase, and the house fairly crowned with a clambering vine of richness and beauty.

Even so with us. Our joy should grow as we press on in holy living. Nothing could be more convincing and attractive to beholders than such spiritual fruitfulness, such holy gladness shining in the eyes, welling up in the heart, and transfiguring the life.

Truly we can then sit under our "own vine" and need not go to others for comfort. We have a vineyard in the life, a joy plant covering us as a shelter, and a greater inner gladness flowing like an intoxicating wine in the soul, with full and increasing measure.

Fourth, there should be a greater faith.

If a person has been introduced to you and endorsed by a trustworthy friend, the acquaintanceship begins with a measure of trust. But when months and years have rolled by and you find this individual, now a friend, always reliable and true and faithful in every changing circumstance to be depended on, then your confidence has grown so that it can scarcely be shaken.

So we knew Jesus already when we entered the experience of sanctification. But when after months and years, filled with all the peculiar experiences, tests, difficulties and assaults coming to the sanctified, we discover that

Christ never fails us, that He always relieves and delivers, always fulfills His promises, then has our faith grown from a seed to a tree whose great boughs protect and whose shadow rests us. We have now such a confidence that no matter what happens, we cling to, believe in, and rest assured that the Savior will bring us out all right. A sweeter trust, a profounder confidence, a mightier faith seems to be the natural outcome of the life in Canaan with its deepening acquaintance with the Son of God.

Finally, our victories should be easier and greater.

Jericho was the greatest triumph the Israelites had up to their entrance into the promised land. But Jericho was not the mightiest victory they had after that, by any manner of means. To take that city they required six or seven days of marching, an encirclement of the place thirteen times and a great deal of noise. But the day came in following years when they won a mightier victory while standing still and playing on harps. And at another place God overwhelmed their enemies by throwing down stones upon them from heaven, and all they had to do was to stand and behold the salvation of the Lord.

In like manner our victories in the life of holiness should be greater and easier as we sweep deeper into the experience.

We have noticed that when persons are first sanctified, there is still a great leaning upon, and use of old-time weapons. There is still a trust in the bow and spear, and an almost unconscious use of severe methods in dealing with all kinds of opponents.

After a while they discover that rams' horns may do well, but harps are better. The first may stun and deafen, but the other goes to the heart and moves the soul. They also gradually get to see that if God has entrusted them with the sharp razor of truth it was intended for a milder and more merciful use than the cutting off of men's heads.

Still the advance goes on, and the man deep in the Canaan experience leaves it to God to fight his battles and cast stones of conviction from heaven into the breasts of his enemies. The astonishing vision to the world is that of a victor who has not laid his hand on a single carnal weapon, nor lifted a solitary stone to cast in self-defense; but keeping sweet all the time, and committing all to God, faces undismayed the world, the flesh and the devil, while God gives him the greatest victories of his life.

CHAPTER 13

FOUR IMPORTANT DUTIES

Paul had been speaking of the “Holiest;” how to enter in by faith; and concludes the figure with the mention of certain duties we should not forget after passing through the veil which had been rent for our admission.

One thing urged is that we hold fast our profession.

It is not possession he is talking about, but the proclamation by tongue and cleaving by life to the wonderful experience God has given us.

Men may scout as they will about our oft-repeated testimony to full salvation; and say that it is a poor experience which has to be proclaimed in order to be retained. Nevertheless it is noticeable that the person who puts the bushel of silence over the holy flame with which God glorified his soul will soon have neither light nor heat left to tell about.

We have never testified distinctly to sanctification as a present grace, but we felt on concluding that we stood on advanced spiritual ground, a greater strength was in the soul, a sweeter joy in the heart, and the skies felt a mile nearer.

A second duty is to “provoke unto love and good works.”

This is a very remarkable expression. We have seen people who provoked others to anger, and retaliation. We have seen individuals by rasping speech and unpleasant manner, by a tale-bearing spirit and nagging tongue, set a home or social circle by the ears. But here is the apostle exhorting us to provoke people to love and good works. And, thank God, it can be done.

We once heard a man say that he thought he was liberal until he got acquainted with a Christian who was giving three-fourths of his income to God. That sight revolutionized his own methods; and a steady flow of greenbacks began to leave his purse in a heavenward direction from that time. He had been “provoked” unto good works.

A gentleman told the writer that his devotional habits had been marvelously affected by the sight of a preacher stretched for two hours on his face in

prayer. He, was by that silent spectacle “provoked” into closer communion with God.

A preacher became much irritated over the way he thought he had been treated at a campground. His displeasure became speedily manifest. Numbers of Christians severely let him alone, thinking that it would do him good to feel the weight of the house which he had dragged down upon himself. Let him eat of his own bitter dish, which he has fixed up, was the thought and words of a number. But there was an elderly minister on the ground who had gone deeper into the Christ life, knew human nature better, and was himself saved, through and through. He sought out the cloudy-faced brother, reminded him of what he had done for the cause of Christ, how he was loved and appreciated by the brethren, and assured him of his own unchanging esteem and affection. With his genial face, kindly tongue, and arm thrown about the brother’s neck, the heart melted, tears flowed, and Spring, with its warmth and gladness, suddenly burst out of the middle of December. No one has ever had reason to complain of that brother since. He was provoked back unto love and good works.

A third duty is laid down in the words, “forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.”

There is a great temptation to do this ever and anon in life. Sometimes the deadness of the pulpit will be the argument; sometimes the thought that we are not wanted is the motive. Various and adroit are the efforts of the adversary to make us secede, go into retirement, withdraw from religious service or cut loose entirely from the church.

Of course it is distressing not to be understood in one’s own family, social and ecclesiastical circle; and it is heartrending to hear the holy doctrine and experience ridiculed and denied that you know to be true. But what if God should want one to be a martyr, and desires the people to see how a sanctified man can be abused and maligned and yet keep sweet. Then surely if we forsake the post of suffering we have made a grievous mistake and hurt the cause we love.

We read once of a man who told his preacher that he saw no need of congregational worship, that he served God alone, and best when all to himself. The preacher in reply took the tongs and removing a red-hot coal of fire laid it by itself on the hearth, and then leaning back in his chair watched it. In a few seconds it lost its intense flow, began to darken here and there, and finally became a cold, black, fireless, lifeless lump of matter. Both men had silently watched the change, and when it was complete, the

man at whom the preacher directed this sermon in parable, said: "I see it. You mean that if I stay to myself away from God's people, I will lose my light, warmth and fire. I won't stay away. I will come back."

One thing the advanced Christian must remember, and that is, he is to mingle with God's people not alone for the benefit that will come to himself, but for the good he will do to them.

The fourth duty is that we should "exhort one another daily."

Not abuse one another. Not slash one another to pieces with censure and pitiless judgment. No, the word is exhort.

We heard a man claiming full salvation get hold of a brother for some real or fancied fault, and such a tongue-lashing we never heard equaled in life. The man thus dressed down never opened his lips.

We have read letters that were misnamed letters of brotherly counsel and rebuke, and such were the stabs and blows throughout, that the periods were suggestive of leaden bullets, and the handwriting appeared like lines of swords and bayonets. As we once said on a public occasion, God entrusted His servant with a razor to shave off some superfluous hair, and that servant became so wrought up that he cut off the man's head. He started out to be like Jesus, and wound up a Jehu. This is the peculiar peril of all young and newly sanctified people. Great light and a burning zeal have come, and now let everybody look out or somebody will be hurt. They make the mistake that the misguided subjects of Henry of England made who thought to please the king by the slaying of his servant. They commit even a greater mistake. For suppose a father in anguish over the sinful life of his son should cry out that the boy was breaking his heart. "Some friend of the father, hearing the cry and witnessing his suffering, takes a dagger, finds the unfaithful son, and buries the blade in his heart. Coming back, he tells the father what he has done, and is at once greeted by him with a heartbroken wail, 'Oh, my poor boy!' and then falling senseless at his feet."

No need to explain the parable. One thing is certain, that we will never please God by crushing one of His children.

In one of our Southern cities a member of the church began to fall away. As this took place, a number of people gathered up their skirts, and focused their eyeglasses to see the final plunge. The pastor, who is now in heaven, had the spirit which Paul speaks of in the tenth chapter of Hebrews. He

overtook the brother one Sabbath night as he was walking from the church to the parsonage. Slipping his arm through that of the wanderer, and later putting his arm about him, he told the silent man how he had missed him from church; of how others regretted his absence; of the good he had done there in other days; and of the good he could yet do if he would return to Christ and duty. The moonlight did not fall more beautifully and soothingly to the eye all around them than did the lovely spirit and healing words of the servant of God come upon the heartsick, life-tired man at his side. With the tears filling his eyes, and heart all melted and broken, the backslider turned from his wandering that night, and came back to the church, and still better to duty and to Christ. The wandering sheep, and the faithful under shepherd who went after him, are both with the great Shepherd in the skies today. And all three are glad.

May we all do more exhorting and less abusing and criticizing; The heart is so easily wounded. The soul is so quickly discouraged and hurt to death, that if we do not have a boundless and pitiful love we cannot do the work God wants to have done. The wounded spirit does not want a slashing Jehu, but a sympathizing Jesus.

CHAPTER 14

DIVINE GUIDANCE

All of us who are really Christians believe in the directing and leading power of God in our lives. Sometimes the influence is felt to be a drawing in a certain direction, and again there is a conscious check or restraint. We feel warned against taking steps that apparently seem all right, and are suddenly stopped in relating matters of a confidential or sacred character to obviously sincere and good people. A visit is made, or a trip is put off through a sweet, gentle, steady influence within, and which instantly becomes sweeter the instant we obey.

Of course there are people who have gone off on this line into extravagance and fanaticism. But this is the case with every doctrine and truth of Christianity, and as we do not surrender the great experiences of grace because of mistaken individuals, so we cannot think of giving up the blessed doctrine of the divine providence and leadership in life, because of some extremists, who wait for God to tell them to do what they ought to have sense enough to perform at once for themselves, and who claim special manifestations, impressions and leadings where none are needed.

Leaving this class and their fanciful life out, yet the main truth remains that God will lead and guide the willing and obedient soul. Even more, that he strives with our ignorant and honest deceptions and mistaken friendships and blundering intentions, and labors to bring good and victory, wisdom and grace out of it all for us. Who has not felt after great efforts put forth to carry out some cherished plan or design, and one not necessarily sinful, that an invisible hand brought it all to naught; that a greater power secured very different results?

But we go back to the feature of a conscious guidance, a sweet, gentle pressure upon the soul, under which is made clear to the Christian the direction God wishes him to follow. Here, indeed, many can wonderingly, gratefully and adoringly speak. God would deliver from all kinds of hurtful entanglements, and so we doubt not that many of His listening, observing and obedient children have been delivered from friends who would have been false, have been kept from business partnerships, and prevented from marriages that would have led to a life of misery if not to ruin.

The rebutting statement will be made that many of God's people do make these mistakes and enter into various kinds of entanglements that bring sorrow beyond calculation, and in some cases backsliding and loss of the soul. Our reply is that we doubt not they were warned and striven with by the Spirit, and that God tried to lead them differently, but they were heedless, careless, prayerless and disobedient at the time, and so the calamity came, for God cannot force the human will.

We know of a number, both male and female, who were impressed of God not to marry as they did, and the whole after life became clouded and miserable. In such cases, if God saw in the future that there would have been a happy religious change and blessed adaptation, we doubt not there would have been no warning. The deep impression not to marry a certain man or woman means that it will never turn out right if the relation or union is entered upon.

When the writer was in his early ministry he was urged to come to a town a hundred miles away and hold a meeting of a week. As he was packing his valise to leave he was deeply impressed not to go. Being then young in these things, of which we are now writing, and full of zeal, rather than knowledge, he dismissed the thought, though it returned repeatedly, and took his departure. He, with many strange hindrances, reached the place, but the most unprecedented bad weather set in, and no meeting could be held. Returning after a few days of utter failure, he found a case of desperate sickness at his house and that his presence had been needed from the first day he had left.

Three times since then he has been on the point of relating things of a sacred and precious character to certain parties, when he was as immediately checked and prevented by an influence that he has learned to know, thank God, very well. Later on, with the changes of time and people, he found out why the impression and leading were given.

We remember once to have read of a preacher who, wearied with writing and study, had bowed his head over his writing table, when suddenly came an impression almost as vivid as a flash of sheet lightning, "Throw yourself back." Instantly he did it, when with a crash the chimney fell, crushing the table where he had been leaning.

We know a gentleman very well who has ever been a devout man. One morning before day he was suddenly awakened by the Spirit of God with the deep impression upon him like a command, "Get up, dress, and go out on the street."

Immediately he replied aloud to the Lord, as was often his custom: "Lord, if this is your voice I am willing, but what can I do on the street before day?" Again came the impression, "Get up, dress and go out on the street."

Still again he exclaimed, "Lord, I see it is snowing. What could I do for you on the street at such a time?"

At once he began to feel a cloud coming over him, and the Spirit seemed to be withdrawing; whereupon the man sprang up and said, "All right, Lord, I'll go. Don't leave me;" and instantly he felt the smile of God upon his soul.

As he dressed he became still more serene and peaceful in spirit, and when he stepped out on the street and strode down the deserted and snow-covered pavement, he was a happy man. He had trudged some six or eight blocks when he looked up with a smiling face through the falling flakes and said:

"Lord, I don't know what you want me to do; but I am very happy walking around here in the dark for you. If this is what you want, it is all right."

By this time his soul was on fire and a joy unspeakable filled him. He went on several blocks farther, when just as day began to break, he saw a man on the other side of the street with a tin dinner pail in his hand. At once came the inward voice, "Join yourself to him." He did so, and crossing over and stopping the man he found that he was not a Christian. He then told him that God had awakened him and sent him forth that early to meet him and talk with him about the salvation of his soul.

The speaker's own heart was burning with the love of God, and his voice was tender and kind; his eyes overflowed, and God filled his mouth with the right words. So when he asked the man if he would let him pray for him he bowed his head in consent and they both got down in the snow together. Oh, how God's servant prayed, and how the poor sinner wept! When they arose from their knees salvation had come to the man who carried the dinner pail.

The men shook hands and parted forever. The laborer went on to his distant factory, and the merchant returned to his bed, but not to sleep. He held a special service of praise and thanksgiving in his room an hour before the early mass of the Catholics.

In speaking afterwards of the incident, he said he believed that God saw that

the man would be killed that day in the factory by some accident, or that his heart was in a ripe state of salvation, so that the case for either reason had to be taken in hand at once; hence the urgent, repeated call, "Get up, dress and go on the street." The merchant furthermore said: "I have never seen the man since, but I firmly believe I will meet him in heaven."

CHAPTER 15

PROVIDENTIAL DEALINGS

Some one has said that every man's life is a plan of God. This single thought awakens other reflections. We begin to see that the peculiar temperament has been given, the location of life chosen, one's surroundings ordered, and the divine personal dealings all agree with some definite purpose in the mind of God.

We question whether any thoughtful person has not been repeatedly impressed with the fact that a strange, great power seems to be in his life quietly shaping and overruling in spite of all plans, purposes and efforts of the man himself. The devout soul gets to see that this mysterious agency is God Himself; while the spiritually untaught rails at what he calls fate and the accidents of time.

There is no life in the Bible that appeared more God-overlooked and forsaken than that of Joseph. And yet, as the history continues, and the years bring in light and explanation, we see that his sale into slavery, the wrongs inflicted upon him in Egypt, the slander which he could not clear up, and the long closed prison door which he could not open, and all, were the very things that under God helped to make him what he became.

If ever a man had his faith tried it was Abraham. Lot got the best part of the country; a part of his domestic life was a torture in the case of Hagar and Ishmael; he was a wanderer for scores of years in the land God gave him; and he died without seeing the divine promise fulfilled. And yet, as we look over the long period of faith testing, and see the outcome in the character of the man whom God called His friend, we see that no mistake was made and divine wisdom ran through it all.

We doubt not that if Joseph or Abraham had the choosing of certain events in their lives, they never would have included the things which happened. And we feel equally assured that none of the Christian readers of this chapter, if they had been allowed in the beginning of their lives to have decided upon the occurrences which have so colored and marked their experiences and affected their characters for good, would ever have asked for them. Rather, they would have prayed to be delivered from them.

Naturally we would not want to see our loved ones die until we had followed more than half of the family circle to the cemetery. Who would care to lose their property and come down to pinching want? Who would suggest to God that great physical pain should visit the body, or that misrepresentations of conduct and life should be circulated, or that friends should become cold and fall away, and yet these are events that come to most if not all of us, and, what is more, are the very things that by the blessing of God become so graciously potent to break up the proud spirit, educate the heart, wean us from the world, and bind us to God.

Truly, if we had the ordering of the events of our lives, we would not be worth the powder that would blow us up. It would be curious to see a person who had never had a care or sorrow, never lost a friend or loved one, knew nothing of anxiety or trouble, had everything he wanted and spent the hours and days flitting about among the flowers of new pleasures and indulgences like a butterfly. Such persons would find it impossible to sympathize with the sad ones of life, and would bear in them a mine not only undeveloped but of whose treasures they knew nothing. We have thought what an affliction it would be to be cast for days and weeks in the company of such light, thoughtless, giddy beings. Such people are not those to whom we turn in time of great trial and sorrow; they cannot advise and lead the tortured, bewildered soul; cannot heal the broken heart; and are not only seen to be helpless but feel themselves their inability and incompetency on these very occasions.

Some men and women are remarkable in their ability to help others in the spiritual life. This power did not come accidentally. It was not picked up in a moment on the roadside, or borrowed from another. It came from a long discipline of suffering. Sanctified sorrow did its work. Losses came, but there was left something in its place more valuable than that which was taken away. Friends fell away, but the heavenly Friend drew nearer. Then there came lessons on the sick couch and by the sick bed. The empty cradle and then later on vacant chairs multiplying in the home made the heart very tender, and heaven very near. The long hours of wakeful nights talking with God and asking Him to adjust the heart and shoulder to the old troubles that had suddenly become heavier, and to accept new ones that had forced themselves in, brought a knowledge and wisdom that are never to be found in colleges and universities.

The teacher of rhetoric and oratory taught the young sophomore how to wave his hand and pitch his voice in his declamation at Commencement. It was well done, but no heart was touched, and there was much suppressed amusement in the audience. But Christ as the sanctifier, comforter and

teacher in sorrow and trial will so instruct the soul that there will be gestures of the hand, looks of the eye, and accents of the voice, that aside from words themselves, will bring light, strength, comfort and benediction to multitudes.

It is to be remembered that a statue is not produced by additions, but by a series of removals seen in cutting, chipping, filings and polishings. It was first a block of stone without much shape, but after a great deal of taking away, the beautiful, graceful or majestic figure became a perfect delight to the eye.

In the carrying out of the divine plan in our lives we have been struck with the fact of how much has to be taken from us. Not only sins, but possessions; not only wrong notions, prejudice and ignorance, but friends, cherished plans, and the brightest of hopes. All of us have seen some of whom we would say, if intellectual error was corrected, or that mistaken idea of duty, or that fierce manner, or that manifestation of spiritual pride could be removed, how lovely the character would be.

If men notice these failings and faults, these shortcomings and overstretchings, how much more will God observe them. And His plan is by the cleansing of the blood, the teaching of His Spirit and the dealing of His Providence to deliver in every respect.

There is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the soul of the believer, but after that there are steady removals in the life, not of inbred Sin or sins, but a cutting and clipping, a filing and polishing, an emptying and taking away, an undeceiving, separating and weaning, that is quietly done, yet in the course of time is seen to be simply marvelous as a performance and an effect.

There are many empty bird cages in the divinely led life. The curious puzzles and gaudy colored toys are forgotten in the garret. The sports and pastimes that once so engrossed, have been powerless for years to interest. Sepulchers stretch in a long line away back to the time God met us and gave us true wisdom with everlasting life. What strange names are on those tombs. Some stand for persons and some for things. You now marvel how they could have stood between you and God. But the Lord drew near and stripped away veils, gave deeper insight, touched both them and you, and then they died to you or you died to them. There were more funerals, other life removals, the tombs increased, the idols were ivy-covered, the earth got smaller, heaven came nearer, and the soul now perfectly convinced and contented with the fact that Christ is all in all, finally awaits joyfully and eagerly the divine summons to the skies.

It is very blessed to observe what comes to the soul in place of the things that are taken away. Pearls of character are formed from blows given the unresisting heart. The stripe received for truth's sake becomes a badge of honor. The desertion of friends brings in unprecedented divine communion, and a wealth of heavenly sympathy; the fire of trouble burns the cords that bound us; the midnight vigil in suffering awakens a midnight hymn, and the casting into the furnace secures the presence of another whose form is like unto the Son of God.

The Bible speaks of "treasures of darkness." We had to penetrate some very gloomy hours and conditions to find out the meaning of this verse. We came up from great depths of trial with our hands full of gems. The soul became rich with power to understand and help others. We were able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we had been comforted of God. We obtained not only "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, but the precious things put forth by the moon;" while "darkness showed us worlds by night we never saw by day."

CHAPTER 16

GOD'S OVERRULING POWER

We are told that Satan is mighty, but we know that God is almighty. The signs are abundant and unmistakable of divine omnipotence. Stars, oceans, mountains and all proclaim it. The heavens and earth both declare this glory of God.

There is another power of the divine being, seen in the history of the world itself, and beheld in the providential march of events, which impresses the thoughtful as profoundly as the omnipotence in creation, though exerted quietly and in a different way. The very fact of this strange force of God, exerted noiselessly, meeting the free agency of men, and bringing the wild, fierce actions of individuals and nations to results utterly uncalculated, unlooked for, and opposite to what was desired, calls for greater wonder than His creating the universe out of nothing, and hanging it with all its flying, intricate systems, in empty space.

The Bible is filled with this marvelous and most comfortable truth. God is not only able, but does overrule the actions of men and devils for the good and glory of His kingdom. The captivity of His people for seventy years in Babylon, supposed by the enemies of Israel to be a perfect victory, and crushing defeat to them, and regarded by themselves as an unmixed woe, was ordered of God to scatter and spread among their very enemies, and to nations beyond, the same truths He had been revealing to them for centuries.

The sale of Joseph by his brethren into a life of bondage is plainly declared in Holy Writ to have been permitted, and good brought to many out of the cruel transaction.

In like manner we see the hatred of Haman, made to work out the elevation of Mordecai; the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira brings down the divine judgment and a resultant protection to the church; while the persecution of Herod is made by the blessing of God, in the scattering of the apostles, a means of spreading everywhere the glorious Gospel, and so revival fires sprang up in all directions.

The crucifixion of the Savior by bad men is made the great act of

Redemption. The very fall of man ushers in a scheme of salvation which brings to the soul a whiter, deeper holiness than that possessed by Adam; and the Garden described in the last chapter of Revelation is more beautiful and blessed than the one mentioned in Genesis.

We see this amazing power of God in human history. There is a Man who wears a crown of thorns who does what He will with the kings who have crowns of gold upon their heads. The Bible calls Him the Prince of the kings of the earth. He continually brings good out of evil. He saves His people not only from their enemies, but from their own mistakes and errors. He is adequate for every contingency and happening. The history of the Huguenots and the Puritans is but another confirmation of this silent but omnific energy of God among the nations. Men can do wrong, but God can bring good out of it to His people, and glory to Himself.

When this fact is seen to be true in the individual life, very great indeed is the joy and comfort. The truth becomes not only a tonic to faith, but a preventive of despair, and a wellspring of gladness itself, when the hands of our enemies have been laid heavily upon us, or we have acted ourselves in a foolish and blundering way.

If we will turn to God, and be true to Him thereafter, He will not only forgive and deliver, but bring blessing and blessedness out of the whole matter. The word is that all things shall work together for good to them that love God.

That God sanctifies sickness and bereavement to our spiritual advantage, many of us have abundant reason to testify. Both of these powerful visitations checked wildness of career, altered mistaken judgments, and transferred our thoughts, affections and treasures to the skies. The heart came near breaking as the vacant chair, empty room and desolate life confronted us, but this same affliction was the beginning with many of a better, and with still others of a holy life.

No one would naturally prefer trouble to come into the heart and home, yet a great multitude of the Bloodwashed can witness to the everlasting benefit brought to the spirit by these mournful histories of the past. Under God's hand it occasioned the severing of cords that bound us to earth, and the destruction of idols that threatened the ruin of the soul.

When this truth we are speaking of comes to be applied to the wrongs inflicted upon us by others, it increases still more in wonder. How can unjust and harsh dealing, how can the words of innuendo and vituperation,

the poisonous breath of suspicion, the mud of slander itself, be overruled for good? Strange as it may appear, the transforming work of God is beheld even here, and not only with the victim, but to the injurer and wronger of his fellow-creature and brother, if he repents and obeys God. To the latter comes a most profitable lesson in the partial or complete loss of divine communion. No matter what has been the spiritual attainment or obtainment, this character judge, critic, and detractor finds to his bitter cost that he cannot go on saying that he loves God, whom he has not seen, and yet loves not and stabs the brother whom he has seen. Vain is the argument that it is because he has seen him that he gives him repeated unkind verbal blows and written stabs. The reply of the Word is: "Who art thou that judgeth another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up."

A man who has any sense at all, or any appreciation of the presence and power of God in the heart, will never care to take a second excursion into the realms of unfriendly, unbrotherly criticism and actual slander. God stood aside and let his foolish servant wander in this dreary country for a while, that he might learn in a never to be forgotten way how sour and bitter are the fruits that grow in that region, and how very far away the sky seems to be to those who visit or dwell in that country. Everlasting good has come to that individual who will thus be taught of God.

As for the victim himself, we never saw a true child of God go down under such attacks. If he continues to love, and walk humbly and faithfully with his Lord, everything is made to work together for his good. Personal wrongs, unjust treatment, detraction, slander and all that unlovely brood of the thoughtless and bitter tongue, are made marvelous forces of good, to wean from earth, keep the spirit lowly, bring out the virtues of patience and long-suffering, develop faith and love, cause the soul to live in an atmosphere of prayer, and fill the heart with the sweetest consolations of the Holy Ghost.

Nor is this all; we learn by these experiences not to make again the mistake of the kind of Judah in showing all the treasures of Jerusalem or of the heart, to anybody and everybody who comes along. It will not do to throw pearls before all whom you meet. Not every individual recognizes a gem when it is shown. He might think it a grain of corn, and angry at the disappointment turn afterwards and rend you.

Still again, by these experiences we learn that the apostle meant what he said, when, under inspiration, he declared, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." The gospel does not demand of us an instantaneous confidence, and

thrusting forward into places of honor and responsibility of every one who comes suddenly into our private life and ecclesiastical circle. On the contrary, it teaches a kind of moral test and probation, in these very words, "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

We have a preacher friend who has a great way of taking a sudden fancy to some new convert or reclaimed backslider, and of thrusting him forward into most prominent places in pulpit and on platform. In every instance, these men have turned upon him, and done him injury in word and deed.

In the Gospel of John are the remarkable words that Jesus did not in a certain place commit Himself to men, "for He knew what was in man."

What He knew through His omniscience, His people have to pick up in scraps through very bitter experiences of human faithlessness and injustice. So it is that our wrongs, if properly received and borne, are made to bring us good, and do us good. We not only grow in grace, but in knowledge. We not only obtain a greater measure of religion, but we get more sense.

CHAPTER 17

“BEFORE HIM”

There seems to be many gospels these days. In making of books that claim little short of inspiration and direct revelation there is no lack. False Christs and prophets are numerous. Teachers are on all sides, claiming to have the whole truth, and everything else besides, unless it be that patient, pitiful, humble, unprovokable love commanded by the Bible, and illustrated by the Savior. Woe be to the man who does not see and agree with such teachers in all things. I say unto you that it were better that a millstone were hung about his neck and he be cast into the depths of the sea. Yea, better that he never had been born.

There are various forms of holiness or sanctification advocated, believed in and exemplified. The monastic over against the fleshly; the fanatical and the shallow, the narrow and the broad, the severe and the loose; in a word, many counterfeits as well as misapprehensions of the graces. Some people with hard, unbending lives, Dark Age practices, and the emphasizing of matters not essential to salvation, repel a multitude of honest inquirers. Still others, with a laxness of life, levity of spirit, and an utter absence of prayerfulness, disgust a still greater number of observers.

Of course the true type of holiness is to be found in life. Many are adorning this doctrine of the Bible, though often making mistakes of judgment and general blunders of the head. This true type of godliness will of course be described in the Scripture, and that description and the human light ought to agree.

There are different verbal presentations of the great blessing in the Word. All are lovely and forcible, but one embraced in the two words forming the caption of this chapter is especially striking to the writer. A man filled with the Holy Ghost is talking about a Bible holiness which God had promised with a great vow should be the experience of His people. It was to be a holy life lived “before Him.”

Two very impressive facts come out of this brief but remarkable expression. The first is the exalted type of the holiness itself. It was a life lived before or in the presence of God. There can be, and is, a holiness before men, that is not holiness at all. It is possible to deceive men with a

profession, and not possess the thing professed. There can be a fair exterior, when inside there is decay and moral rottenness. It is possible to stand up on propositions that we have it all, and yet falsify; to say "saved and sanctified to date," and yet be running on the memory of an experience whose glow and glory and power have long been gone. We have all seen strange things on this line; persons making wrong representations in order to obtain railroad permits and favors; handing a street car conductor a transfer ticket whose time has expired fully an hour; repeating damaging rumors about individuals without being assured of their truth; failure to fulfill promises and obligations, etc. Over against these kinds of lives was hoisted the stereotyped expression of "fully saved," and "saved to date."

Some would say that this would hardly be a holiness before men, as the moral flaws are so evident. The reply is that all do not know these flaws. So the ignorance of the public in regard to these features, and the often repeated testimony, make it a holiness before men which, however, utterly breaks down before God.

That is certainly a beautiful and correct life which can appeal to God's eye and judgment. It was to this that God called Abraham, in the words, "Walk thou before me and be thou perfect."

It is evidently one thing to walk before men, and another to walk before God. That is a pure heart and holy life which can look up and say, "Thou God seest me," and be happy in the thought.

The writer has several friends who do much slum and mission work, and have to go down into the vilest places to rescue souls. The great majority of men would not believe they could come in contact with these people and witness such scenes, and yet remain unbesmirched and unhurt. But they walk down there before God, and know the truth as well as the joy of the Bible statement about having wings of burnished silver, though moving in the midst of pots.

There are conditions and circumstances where some who live at a greater distance from God could not see how victory could occur in view of the surroundings and happenings, and yet Christ has followers who come up unfallen, unwounded and unsoiled.

We heard a preacher say in New England, "I am willing to be photographed any hour of the darkest night on earth." Another said, "God can trust me anywhere." These two utterances were simply paraphrases of the Bible description of a holiness which can live its life before God.

The second fact brought out in the words “Before Him,” is that of a wonderful deliverance for the genuinely sanctified man.

Most of us start out to live holiness in a way to please men. It is bound to become a bitter bondage, and affect not only happiness but usefulness itself.

We do not mean to say that we are to despise public opinion, act regardlessly of social law and custom, and ignore observances that have become like commandments on stone, because based on prudence and propriety, and upheld by common sense. A genuine holiness will not act offensively and suicidally in that way. The very correctness of the outward life will be a recommendation of the experience we profess.

Still there is a blessed truth in the thought that we are called to live holily before God.

In the first place it would be very exhausting to be compelled to go around every morning and ask everybody whether we were living to please them or not.

Second, as so many good people have very different standards, it would be impossible to satisfy all if we tried our best. We have excellent people who would distrust our profession if we remain members of some church. They would say we had compromised. Others would doubt us if we wore a necktie. Still others would cast us out of their affection and company if we did not advocate some doctrine they believed in, and yet which was not essential to salvation.

Third, it would seriously cripple our religious work; for the time spent in seeing whether every one of our friends and acquaintances approved us, would be so great that we would not be able to work for God as both He and we would desire.

Fourth, it would be certain to destroy self-respect, and religious character itself. What studying of countenances, what inquiries in the parlor and office, to know whether our ways pleased our relatives, friends, acquaintances, church members and followers, or not. The greater the following, or the social or ecclesiastical circle, the more tremendous the undertaking of finding out whether we met the public demand.

Then how contemptible we would become in their eyes, and also in our own. How exhausted we would be by nightfall with the endless, bitter and

fruitless labor.

On the other hand, if one were living to please God, and would simply look to Him on awakening in the morning, or up to Him through the day on the street, in the store, or at the home, with the whisper, “Do I please you, my Savior?” we would have the instantaneous and delightful smile and voice of the Spirit upon the soul.

A fifth thought is that such is human nature that the more you try to please some people the more exacting they become. They will begin to demand as a right what had first been offered as a compliment. We have seen a husband labor to please his wife, and a wife try to do the same for the husband, and the result in a short time was a domestic tyrant! When certain natures see that you are trying to make brick for them, they will soon exact straw in addition. Then comes the lash of the bond-master, and a strange kind of repetition of Egyptian life again.

A sixth thought is that we will never please more really good people, and have a more successful life and happy heart for ourselves, than when, without any sourness or bitterness whatever, we give up trying to please men and go to pleasing God in any, every, and all things. The longer we live the more convinced we are that “holiness before God” is the best, truest, safest, happiest and most victorious life this side of heaven.

CHAPTER 18

“LITTLE IN THEIR OWN SIGHT”

Surely there is not a more beautiful Christian grace than humility. Its very rarity adds to its preciousness. We get so sick of the fuss and feathers, the swagger and swell of the world, that a meek spirit, a genuinely lowly heart connected with spiritual excellence is as refreshing and delightful to the mind and soul as an oasis with waving palm trees and purling springs is to the exhausted traveler.

When Saul is first beheld in the Old Testament his modesty and humility are more attractive than his imposing height and handsome countenance. He impressed all who met him with this beautiful trait of character. He had to be dragged out of “the stuff” where he had hidden himself when they were after him to make him a king. Samuel referred to this earlier part of his life when he said, “When thou wast little in thine own sight.” It was because of this conscious littleness that God chose him. But later he became puffed up and great in his own eyes, and God set him aside, a mode of procedure which God keeps up to this day. The thing to do is to stay little, if we would continue in God’s hands as instruments of power and good.

Christ says: “We must be converted and become as little children.” After conversion according to this we get little. Truly the converted life and “littleness” are not synonymous in the spiritual realm, as we have seen the two manifested. Let the reader recall that semicircular row of church dignitaries on the platform; or the appearance of some lay brother escorted by an usher up the crowded aisle, if he would grasp what we mean. The strut, swell and appearance of bigness are plainly to be seen in the lives of many who name Christ.

We recall a converted brother who was elected a member of the Legislature of his state. Large before, he now became larger, and bore around with him a look of swollen importance that impressed his old friends with keenest pain. He got to looking over his chin at people, extended one finger in shaking hands, and barely noticed certain individuals and classes. All this time he was a prominent member of the church and, in addition, was a local preacher. He had been converted but had not become a little one.

Many of us can remember when God could not or would not use us

because of our felt bigness. It was a fact conscious to us and evident to others. We were Christians, felt we would be saved if we died, but the Lord did not use us. We were too big.

There are cannon that are hardly ever fired because so large, and the firing is so expensive. Some are called "Disappearing Cannon." We have seen them in the church. One shot, or one sermon, and we see them no more for a year.

There is a church bell in Moscow that is too big to be rung. We have seen that bell in other places. As we studied the character we said it would be better to be a dinner bell. The latter is small, it is true, but it does something.

When Gideon prepared his army to go up to battle, the Lord told him he had too many soldiers. So first twenty-two thousand men were taken from him, and after that nearly ten thousand more, until only 300 were left. There was too much bigness or self-sufficiency as they first appeared, for God to handle them. They would have taken all the credit and glory of the victory to themselves. They would have thought that it was their bow and spear and prowess that achieved the triumph, and the Lord would not have had the honor.

We read once of a Spanish cavalier stopping at a hostelry at a late hour of the night and calling loudly for the servant and entertainment. The landlord finally woke up and standing sleepily rubbing his eyes in the hall, cried out, "Who is there?" The proud reply of the grandee was, "The Duke of Saltillo, Count of Aleantara, Knight of Avalon and Lord of Ferrara." "Too many of you," was the response of the landlord, who had not looked out of the door, but now relocked it, and went to bed.

"Too many of you" is the trouble today in great union meetings, and "Too much of you" the cause of individual failure in the work of God in still other quarters. God cannot or will not use the proud, self-sufficient man. We have seen him fail a thousand times. He may be propped up with titles, dignities and earthly honors, but it is evident that God does not honor him.

This dreadful fact, which is bound to be beaten into the consciousness of men sooner or later, causes them to adopt union meetings with great flaring external helps. Perhaps the combination will bring success; anyhow if God does not go out with them to battle, and defeat comes, then the shame and mortification of the failure will in a sense be veiled from the public by the fanfare of the trumpets, and the rolling of the ecclesiastical machinery, and the individual will be sheltered from blame by being lost sight of in the

crowd.

The same awful fact leads some preachers to engage a sensational evangelist who has a way of covering up spiritual nakedness and making a defeat appear like a victory; and still other ministers to announce that a great meeting is to be held in their church, by certain great men. "No mourners' benches will be used," is the soothing announcement to the public. The writer of that line knows well that there will be no bench for the mourners, because there will be no mourners for the benches.

In still another quarter the statement is made in a large city paper that a protracted meeting is to be held in a certain church; that there will be a revival carried on without any excitement whatever. The man who penned that notice succeeded in deceiving a number, but not all. There was a time in his ministry when he was little in his own sight, and God used him wonderfully, but he became puffed up, felt sufficient in himself, was duke, count, knight, and Lord all in one, felt he was thirty-two thousand, that he was a big one, and then God left him. The shorn Samson knew there would be no displays of divine power in the meeting. He felt in his soul it would be a tame affair, and so anticipated the result by saying there would be no excitement, no feeling, no demonstrativeness in the services.

See the profound wisdom of the published notice. When, after several weeks of dragging along, nothing really was done, no lightnings from heaven flashed from pulpit and about the altar, no spiritual earthquakes shook the consciences and lives of dead church members, no cries for mercy, and shouts of rapture and victory echoed through the air, it would be very easy to say, "We told you this was the kind of meeting we were going to have."

This indeed was just what the preacher said to the reporters and people. He ended the meeting with the Lord's Supper, announced a church fair for the next week, where there was no lack of demonstration and feeling, and dismissed the congregation with a great handshake. A number of uneasy Christians tried to bolster themselves up with loud and repeated sayings to one another, "that it was a fine meeting — a very fine meeting — a real nice meeting — a good, quiet meeting," etc. It was really curious to hear how often they said this, and looked into each other's faces as if they did not believe in their own words and expected to be contradicted.

The preacher himself went home dissatisfied in heart, though his hawhaws had filled the church, and he almost looked bright in the face several times. He tossed a long time on his bed before he fell into a troubled slumber.

Once before losing consciousness he thought he heard a voice whisper in the dark, "When thou wast little in thine own sight." Later he dreamed that Christ stood at the foot of his bed with a crown of thorns on his head, and turned upon him a prolonged sorrowful look, and then faded away.

How sweet and blessed it is to be little in one's own sight; willing to be overlooked, slighted, set aside and forgotten.

It is delightful to be in a corner with Jesus. It is blessedness itself to be delivered from big mouthings, big celebrations, big everythings outside of actual grace, and to walk quietly, humbly and meekly with the Lord.

There is no pining for high places. No craving for great honors, or the notice and approval of men. The soul is not sour, the heart not unsympathetic, and the life not frozen. It is not the hermit existence, but a life full of humility and meekness. The man has not lost self-respect, is not timorous, fearful and cowardly; on the contrary, he has a spirit of strength and courage in his heart; and yet feels little in his own sight.

This is only one of the many paradoxes we find in the spiritual life, and as an experience is not hard to understand when we remember that the man himself in the midst of victories of all kinds in his life realizes that the success and triumph come because God's smile and blessing are upon voice, labor and life. He conquers through God. He is glad and content that it is so. and God continues to honor him.

Such a man quietly disentangles himself from the trappings and false ways of the world. He does not care for glittering shields and swords, when God has specified a sling and stones as the mode of deliverance. He will not be counted in a phalanx made up of a mixed multitude who are to do battle for the Lord. The neighing of the horses brought up from Egypt give him no assuring thrill of coming victory. His heart sinks as he views the preparations made in a great union gospel service, and knowing God as he does, is confident from the start that nothing will be done, though there is a platform full of dignitaries at one end of the vast hall and the best singers in the city engaged to form a choral band that will impress the audience, while two anthems are to be sung in C sharp, and a third is to be rendered by a famous female singer who will reach E in her performance. This is promised to the public; a kind of musical chromo to draw the crowd.

Oh, how God's little ones turn from all these things! They take no delight in ornate rituals, graces of rhetoric and flowers of oratory. The artistically rendered solo fairly sickens the heart. The sight of the stewards marching

up the aisles in couples with the collection baskets in hand, is felt to be a reaching backward for forms and ceremonies that had been given up in the mightier and more glorious history of the church.

With all this God's little one is not embittered, and does not propose to leave the church or the earth because of questionable doings. Confident of God's power to rectify, he remains sweet through all, and tranquilly expectant of better things and holier times.

Such a character is easily approached. He has no starch-like dignity to uphold and no grandeur to preserve. In speech, manner and life he is perfectly simple. He is not childish, but childlike. In pulpit, pew, at home, in the store or on the street, he is always without affectation. The indwelling of Christ in the heart, the constant consciousness of the presence of God in the life, make it impossible to be otherwise.

These little ones of God may be learned or unlettered men, and yet alike they carry with them the conviction that without Christ they are nothing, and so, though walking on different intellectual planes, and moving often in different social circles, yet all can see that they tread alike the path of lowliness. In this genuine, unaffected humility of spirit arises one of the great causes of their power. It is not alone that God uses only such men with mighty effectiveness, but such a spirit and life in itself strangely appeals to and moves men.

Alas for the world, and alas for the cause of God, and alas for our own souls when we cease to be little in our own sight!

The writer heard his mother say that several such lowly preachers came into her life when she was a girl and that they left an eternal impress upon her. Their gravity, sweetness, gentleness and humility wrought a conviction upon her that she never outgrew. She could not speak of them in after life, when an elderly woman, without her eyes filling with tears. She told us when a child, standing by the side of her rocking-chair, that she could still feel the pressure of their hands upon her head, though they had long been in their graves.

We recall one who in his visits through the country ever seemed fearful of putting a burden on some one. He would be distressed to know that a fowl or animal of any kind had to lose its life to furnish him a meal. He would sit in a cold room uncomplainingly before he would ask for a fire. One morning the lady of the house where he was spending a couple of days saw him at the wood pile gathering a few chips. Intensely mortified at her

oversight of her guest's comfort, the good sister begged him to return at once into the house from the cold wind, and she would have his fire built. But she was not as grieved and pained at her neglect as dear old Brother Clinton, now in heaven, was, that he had been detected in picking up a few splinters and caused some one to have the trouble of making him a fire. Humble to the last he said: "Please don't be worried, sister; I'm not as cold as you think; I just wanted a few chips to warm my feet." The weather was very bitter, and the thermometer low down; but saintly, precious soul as he was, he had drunk in his Master's spirit and felt that he would rather minister unto others than to be ministered to.

We recall still another who used to be an accustomed figure on the streets and roads of a certain Southern state. He went about with a Bible under his arm, and a long staff upon which he leaned, and that came up as high as his head. He not only looked like a prophet, but lived like one, and drank deep of the humble, childlike spirit of his Master.

He spoke to many a man about his soul as he met or overtook the traveler upon the road. Few got over these interviews. Some became angry, but many went away with eyes and hearts full, and not a few were saved.

He would approach a lady as she was tending her flowers in her front yard, and leaning against the fence speak a few words about her soul and Christ and heaven, and leave her in tears and with the promise to give her heart to God. It was found almost impossible to shake off the impression this simple man of God made upon the soul. He felt his littleness, and the Savior used him.

One stormy night he opened the door of a hotel in a Southern town, and looked in upon forty or fifty guests, sitting, standing, smoking and talking in the office. All glanced up as he entered and stood silent in the door, with the lightning-riven night as a background. Rapping the end of his stick several times on the floor, he said solemnly:

"Fifty years from tonight and every soul here will be in eternity."

He never added a single word, but quietly reopening the door vanished in the darkness outside. One gentleman was so affected by the occurrence that he arose, went to his room upstairs, fell upon his knees, asked God for mercy and pardon, and was soundly converted.

It is wonderful what the Lord will do with a man who is small in his own eyes; and equally amazing how little is accomplished by a man who is

self-sufficient and great in his own estimation.

Truly it is better to be little in one's own eyes, little in the opinion of men, and yet great in the sight of God and to be used by Him, than to be one of the earth's big ones and completely set aside and ignored by the Almighty. Better to keep lonely and walk humbly with God than to develop spiritual pride again, become lifted up with a sense of one's own attainments and performances, and reach a place where the Lord cannot and will not use the once useful man.

It is a dreadful thing to stand by the altar and go through all the motions of worship and offer the sacrifice, and call upon God, and then be compelled to admit with the forsaken and unhappy king of Israel, "He answereth me no more."

May we remain God's little ones; for it is a little one that shall chase a thousand, and a small one become a strong nation.

CHAPTER 19

RETRIBUTION

There is undoubtedly such a thing as retribution seen and felt in men's lives. By retribution we mean something which comes back upon us that we inflicted upon others. Our curses, like chickens, return home to roost. Our words and deeds have a boomerang principle or nature in them, and though cast out with great vigor from us, though they speed away as if on a straight line, yet really they go on a very curious curved line of some kind, and return sooner or later with awful power upon the thrower.

We get back the treatment we gave to others. The guillotine we invent to destroy men becomes the instrument of our own death. We fall into the trap we made for others. Our own hearts ache just as we caused others to suffer.

God's truth, providence, a strange, weird justice in events, and the dealings of men, all seem united to make this thing take place in one" life which we call retribution. The man so fond of ladling out medicine to others is made to take it in liberal portions himself. The scandalizer will be scandalized. The pitiless critic and judge of human conduct will find no pity for himself. The man or woman who made wife or husband wretched will get a second partner who will lead them such a dance that the grave will look like an El Dorado in its quiet and restfulness.

We know a preacher's wife who had a way of slapping her husband in sudden fits of anger. God took the man to heaven in the bloom of his life. She married again, and wedded a very wicked man. One of his domestic pastimes was to box his wife's ears, and now and then, by way of variety knock her down. We saw her in both relations, the wife of an honored man of God, and then the pale, dispirited, heartbroken spouse of a horse racer and gambler. As she spoke to us of her first husband, whom we knew well, she burst into tears. We saw she was crying over her medicine, that she was grieving over a bodyrack she had once stretched her first husband upon, "but now he was comforted and she was tormented!"

Knowing life as we do, recalling almost countless incidents that show up this strange kind of retributive justice and judgment which comes into people's lives, we feel that we can say to any one without the slightest hesitancy, "Get ready for the same kind of treatment and trouble that you

bring upon others.”

It may not break upon you in a day or week or month, but it is certain to come at last.

In the Bible we read that the man who took a man's wife from him had his own taken. The son who deceived his father was fooled by his own children. The band of men who laid violent hands upon an innocent youth had the same kind of grasp put upon them when they were guiltless of the charge preferred against them. The man who lived by the sword, like Joab, died by the sword.

Life, as well as the Bible, is full of these kind of happenings. The biter gets bit. The judger gets judged. He who has no mercy gets no mercy, whether it be the condemnation of society or the action of a band of men with a rope determining to lynch the transgressor.

We have stood amazed at the careless, ruthless way some people cast off friends who have been friends indeed. They seem to think they can grow another crop in a few minutes or days. It is a mistake. The real friend is made up not only of a compound of love and character, but is also a growth and product of years. The new friend is never like the old friend. And yet we have seen people cast off old friends as one would a garment.

The result of this in a retributive way is something dreadful to see. They, in time, become cast off, and end their days in loneliness, forsakenness and bitterness. He who rejects a whole life of kindness and faithfulness because of some single defect or imperfection of a friend is not only guilty of consummate folly, but needs to get out of the universe to escape being treated the same way.

We heard a lady once say of a man who was publicly scoring and blistering people from the platform, pulpit and in the newspapers, “He will have to walk a wonderfully straight line now himself, or he will be undone.”

We once knew a lady of considerable means, who had this way of treating people. With a lovely plantation home, large family circle, and everything she desired, she walked roughshod over human feelings. She cast off old acquaintances, cut her own kindred who did not move in her circle, and banished friends on the slightest provocation with the spirit and almost the manner of a grand mogul or sultan.

The day came when she reaped the result of her folly, and drank a bitterer

cup than she had ever placed to human lips. The greatest bitterness was the summing up of her many wrongs in the last few years of her life. She planted thirty years and reaped ten, but to her the ten was longer than the thirty.

All her friends whom she had cast off stayed away. People left her to herself. Her husband died, the children married and moved to distant states, and the old house became so lonely that she left it and rented the plantation to a strange family from the North. She herself moved all solitary to a dwelling a mile or so away, situated on the edge of the hills and overlooking the swamp country for miles.

She used to walk each evening near sunset to the brow of the hill and look at the distant home and plantation where she had passed the golden period of her life with her family about her, and friends and acquaintances in abundance. They were all gone now, many in their graves, many removed, and many forgetful of her.

The first evening she went to the crest of the hill to look at her old home, the large plantation bell began to ring in the distance at the hour of sunset. It always rang at that time to call the "hands" in from the field, and she had often heard it in happier days. As it came to her now, with its deep-toned, plaintive notes, mellowed by a distance of nearly two miles over the fields, it sounded like a death knell, and every stroke seemed as if it would break her heart. More than once we have seen her lonely figure on the summit of the hill listening to that sunset bell, and we doubt not that a sadder woman never lived.

She was taught a bitter lesson. It took years to teach, but she learned it at last; that a person can cast true people out of their hearts and lives if they will, and none can prevent, but the day will come when they also will be cast out. The law of retribution says it shall be so.

It is remarkable how this retribution is seen in the divine dealings with men.

Was it not God who said that "to the froward He would be froward"? What is the meaning of that fearful sentence of Christ, "He that denieth me before men him will I deny before my Father"? Is not that retribution?

Men can laugh at God, His warnings, entreaties, invitations, preachers and gospel. We cannot keep them from laughing. This is their terrible power. But God says that the time is coming that He will laugh at them. Hear His own words, "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear

cometh.”

In these days of salvation God is calling to men to turn, repent, believe and be saved. But they will not hearken. He seeks them, but they will not be found. Now read the Word of God in the light of such conduct: “When your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.”

It is very easy for a man to say, “Go thy way for this time,” to the voice of the Gospel and the call of the Spirit of God, but just as surely the time is coming when God will say to such a man, “Depart from me.” One is almost an echo of the other. “Go thy way” “Depart from me.” The man who says the one to the Lord in Time, is certain to hear the other from God at the Day of Judgment.

The law and workings of retribution seem to be everywhere.

May we all practice the Golden Rule with our fellow-creatures and live the life of perfect obedience with our God.

CHAPTER 20

ABUNDANCE

The word “abundance” is an attractive and suggestive word. There are visions between the letters of sunlight and falling rain, springing corn and waving wheat, boughs laden with blushing fruit and grapes hanging in purple clusters. The word might properly be wreathed about with sheaves of garnered grain, or cornucopia, emptying before it and after it their varied profusion. We all like the word. It has a good look, possesses a good sound, and hints of good things. When we pray it is generally for blessings that will allow the prefix “abundant.” We ask for abundant harvests; that peace and prosperity may abound; that health and plenty may crown the land. When we come to spiritual blessings it is the same; the petition is, “Pour out the Spirit abundantly.”

All this is right — right in both cases, yet we must remember that one is attended with no danger, while the other is a very perilous blessing. The Savior, in His directions in regard to prayer, puts no check or limit on petitions for spiritual blessings. Here is an abundance concerning which one can make no mistake.

“Ask that your joy might be full.” “Be filled with the Spirit,” writes Paul.

But Christ, as well as the church, recognizes other forms of abundance to be dreaded, or received with all caution. There is a fullness and plenty that may engross, ensnare and even destroy. Not all abundance is to be desired. There was a time when waters prevailed; when the floods lifted up their hands and smote the earth with the fullness of their power. Water abounded, but men died! The abundance of the watery element had its equalizing term in the multitudes of perishing human beings. Then we recall an abundance of a peculiar kind that came to the Jews in the wilderness. It consisted of quails. The people loathed angel’s food, the bread which God sent like the dew; they wanted flesh, and that in plenty. and it came! God swept the quails over them in clouds and poured them down like rain. The birds covered the tents and were in piles and hillocks all over the ground. The curse of abundance was upon them. They sat down to eat, and judgment sat down with them! The food came out of their nostrils and they died with the meat between their teeth.

Not all abundance is to be desired. Many have been weighed down and finally sunk into perdition by the fullness of prosperity. Many more have been seriously hindered and injured in the spiritual life for a time. There is such a thing as being rich without and poor within; there is such a thing as obtaining what you crave and losing something better that had been possessed beforehand. David says of the Jews: "God granted them their request, but sent leanness into their souls."

There is a danger of waxing fat and kicking, as did Jeshurun. Not a pastor but knows the peculiar difficulty of approaching and dealing with the man who has prospered in his way, whose barns are filled with plenty and whose lands run out to touch the horizon. It is the man who has waxed great who kicks at authority, whether it be of the world, church or heaven.

Material things are blessings, but an abundance may eclipse heaven, engross the mind and finally materialize one altogether. We were talking once with a physician about the overflow in the Yazoo Delta. We remarked that we felt sure God would bring a blessing out of it all, meaning a spiritual blessing. "Oh, yes," he replied, "I have no doubt there will be a deposit of several inches of fine soil brought by the water." He was already materialized. His mind even then was ploughing and rooting its way in the mud.

There is a danger in any abundance that is of a purely earthly kind, whether it be accumulating business cares and responsibilities, increasing honors or vast possessions. Especially is there peril in the last mentioned case. If a pinhead drawn close to the eye will hide the heavens, what may we expect of an earthly abundance? It is true that Abraham, Isaac and David were all men of wealth, and they glorified God in and with their abundance. The world in all ages has been blessed by such men. Yet is there always peril in plenty. and while some men remain humble, spiritual and benevolent, others are overwhelmed in the floods of their own prosperity or buried under clouds and flocks of descending material benefits and perish with the meat between their teeth.

With multiplied cares, honor and wealth come increased danger, and so there is greater need of prayer, watchfulness, and the practice of inward and outward piety.

As we are confident there is a peculiar uplifting grace imparted to the dying, so there must be a special help vouchsafed the man who succeeds in life and whose cup of material mercies is full to overflowing.

When we hear of a disappointed man, a life of failure and blighted hopes, we say at once: "May God give grace!" And God does. This is our thoughtfulness of the man, and it generally stops here in cases of sorrow. But God's consideration goes farther. He remembers the man who has prospered in his way, and who is in dire peril through abundance. God has special grace for that man. Let him seek and find it in prayer. The disappointed man is likely to sink into the depths of bitterness and despair; the successful man is in danger from great heights. He may fall. Both are in peril, but God has grace for both. He can uplift and uphold the one, and as for the other, though on a pinnacle, God can give His angels charge over him, and they will bear him up on their wings and keep him, lest at any time he should dash foot, or head, or heart against the stones.

CHAPTER 21

TEMPTATION

Temptation is moral test or trial. It is a movement made upon the soul in the direction of evil. It may come from a person or a thing. Through an appeal to the higher or lower powers of our nature the affections, passions or appetites, the will is assailed that it may be overcome and the soul brought into the slavery of sin. The movement may be very violent, or it may be realized as a sapping, deadening influence. Again it may be felt for only a moment, or it may be prolonged with more or less intensity for hours and days.

It is a blessed thought to us that temptation is not sin. It is yielding which brings defilement and condemnation. Neither is prolonged temptation an indication of iniquity in the heart, or any moral weakening. The Savior was engirdled with evil spirits, and had to hear their whispered suggestions for forty days. One of the holiest men who ever graced the Methodist ministry speaks in a volume of his discourses of a violent Satanic assault upon his soul which lasted for hours, the character of which if mentioned would astonish the reader. He was conscious all the while that the attack was an external one, as the whole thing was utterly alien to his character and repugnant to him beyond words to describe.

It is a victory in itself to recognize that the assault upon us is from Satan, and is not born of our own volition and desires. The fact which so depresses and discourages the Christian is the thought that the whole dark state is his own moral tendency and inclination. It is the joy of the Adversary to disguise himself as to make the child of God believe that the Satanic voice is the Lord's, and that the evil spirit at work in him is the outcropping of his own character and nature. The reader can well understand the amazement, gloom and consequent paralysis which falls upon a soul thus deluded. On the other hand, what a relief it is to discover that the hard dark feeling creeping over the spirit, the sickening suggestion, or the violent impulse towards something against which the mind and heart instinctively resist and struggle, is not of ourselves, but from the Evil One.

This discovery often fills Satan with confusion and causes an immediate suspension of the spiritual attack.

It has been truly said of the devil that if he cannot make the Christian sin, his next effort is to disturb his peace, knowing that this is but one step removed from the other. Of course if he can deceive as just described, the soul will be bowed down and the enemy flushed with the first success moves on to another and greater victory.

As the Christian advances deeper in the divine life, the ability to recognize the presence and work of the devil becomes greater; and tranquillity of mind and steady, faithful discharge of duty are wonderfully and correspondingly increased. The man has learned to try the spirits, to distinguish voices, to tell the motions of his own heart from that movement produced on it by the Evil One. So what discourages and dismays some does not move him. He knows his own loyalty to Christ, his heart does not condemn him, he remembers that God is faithful and true, and he has learned to recognize the voice of him who would come as an angel of light to deceive the very elect. Thus it is that rising up to enter upon what is to be a day of great trial, he goes panoplied and prepared. From some atmospheric or physical cause, some brain or nerve exhaustion, he notices that his joy is not as deep, the spirit buoyancy not as great, as upon the day before. To some this would be the signal for dumbness and low spirits, which would last several hours or days, according to the case; the devil meanwhile rejoicing over the spectacle of a Christian belaboring and abusing himself, and yet against whom the Recording Angel had written nothing. At such times all the Adversary has to do is to stand quietly by and furnish cudgels, the man himself doing all the soul flogging. The cudgels being generally memories of past unfaithfulness, mistaken notions of duty, morbid conscience, etc., etc.

On the other hand, to one who has grown wise in the spiritual life, the signs described are immediately scrutinized with humble dependence on God for light, and recognized; the demand for an unusual degree of faith, patience and prayer is at once seen, the situation accepted, and on goes the man quietly, steadily, unwaveringly through the day of temptation, which by this course becomes a day of victory.

Great emotions of joy may come and depart from the very best of Christ's followers; but there are some things which it is our privilege to retain; one is the testimony of our own heart, which, as John says, condemns us not, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and the conscious abiding of Christ in the soul.

The first need never leave us for a moment; the second may settle into a deep, sweet, quiet assurance of divine acceptance, and the third is

announced and recognized as a spirit of rest. If the tender inward joy departs for a season, and a strange dark feeling creeps over the soul like a mist over the sky, the immediate inquiry of the child of God should be to discover if any sin has been committed or duty neglected. Even this should be done without worry or excitement. If self-examination reveals the wrong, then, of course, there should be instant confession to God and an immediate flying to and going under the Blood.

If, as is often the case, the heart condemns us not, we should press on through the trying day patiently and self-containedly. If, in addition to this, we by words of faith and praise hear the response of the Spirit within and feel the sense of inner quietness which declares the presence of Christ, we owe it to ourselves, to man, and to God to maintain an unbroken serenity of manner and cheerfulness of spirit, and as far as possible obey the Bible injunction to rejoice evermore and in everything to give thanks.

It is impossible to rejoice when in sin, but we can under temptation. It is also very easy to be glad both inwardly and outwardly when delightful uplifts of grace are felt within and there is no dark, saddening contact with evil angels from the pit; but it is the mark of high attainment to keep up the language of faith and praise when Satan is attacking and the awful atmosphere of hell fairly encircles the soul.

This is one of the “evil days” which Paul speaks about. He tells us that at such a time we must take the whole armor of God and simply “stand.” He adds, “having done all to stand.” The idea is that there are days of such peculiar trial to the Christian, that simply to hold one’s own and patiently abide is a victory.

If any one thinks this to be a drawn battle he certainly does not understand the spiritual life. He who quietly and faithfully endures at such a time will at the end of the trial discover a wonderful expanse of conquered territory before him, and he has simply to go up and take possession. In addition the sweetest sense of triumph and strength will be in the soul.

We heard a very devout man once say that when one of these days comes to him he bows down at once, like a camel to receive its load; that he realizes that God for good reasons is going to let him be assaulted, sifted, tested, tried, and in a word, loaded; that his duty is to accept the burden. He added that nothing ended the temptation so quickly as the quiet endurance of the situation, and patient uncomplaining discharge of duty while the season of trial lasted. In such a case as this, it seems, that the lesson was learned so rapidly and well that the dark teacher, with his painful rod, was

promptly dismissed. “In patience possess ye your souls,” for “the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

CHAPTER 22

FAVORITISM

There is a practice in the church and world which is very trying to the good and wicked alike. It is known under the word "favoritism." Warring as it does against certain notions of justice and instincts of right, the sensation of pain is general when the exhibition of this great wrong takes place.

Not the less, however, is it seen in many quarters. Royalty has its favorites; the presidents of republics have been guilty of nepotism; the general has his pets; the governor puts all his kindred in good governmental positions; the teacher cannot conceal preference for some boy or girl in the class; even the mother has a child upon whom she lavishes affection and attentions beyond that which the other children receive, though equally and perhaps even more deserving.

Wherever and whenever this is seen there is felt in the heart of every just observer a mingled feeling of sorrow, disgust and condemnation. The ground of disapproval in the human mind is that rewards are being heaped upon the unworthy; that character, and excellence, and faithfulness are not considered at all in the bestowment of favors and honors in these instances, but that the whole thing is an exhibition of a purely selfish preference or personal favoritism.

Many a schoolboy and student at college has had to battle against this most heartsickening treatment. No matter how well he mastered his studies he saw the peculiar favor of the professor or teacher to another in the class who did not do as well, and even failed to appreciate the liking for himself unmistakably declared to all by the instructor's voice and bearing and by the marks on the record books.

We have also known cases where the heart of a daughter was starving for exhibition of love from the mother, and though faithful herself in every household duty, had to see what she craved unavailingly heaped in abundance upon a brother who did nothing in the world to merit such kindness and attention, but ate, drank, slept and growled like an animal while in the house, and forgot them all completely when out of the house.

We have known preachers to have their favorites. Oftentimes they have not

been the most spiritual of the membership, but still their influence at once became supreme and manifest to the entire congregation. The pastor was led by them in all his judgments and actions. If these two or three favored ones (perhaps only one) said, "Let us do this," he did it; or, "Do not do this," then he did it not. So the church festival was held, or the protracted meeting not held, according to the advice of this inner circle of one, two or three. The preacher had read in history that the mistakes, failures and downfalls of certain monarchs of the earth were brought about through their favorites. He agreed to it heartily in his mind as he read and straightway did the same thing in his own life.

Just as well known is it among the ministry that bishops have pets. There are others of the sacred cloth who are brainier and more pious, but the first-mentioned ones, the favorites, have somehow cuddled into the confidence and affection of the general superintendents of the church and are good for prominent positions all the days of their lives.

Some men want "pets" or a man "Friday." Some men want to be "pets" or "Fridays" to a greater or richer man. These two characters will soon meet and be mutually satisfied with each other. But it takes certain attributes, or, rather, lack of them, to be the favorite or tool of an influential man, so that all men are not promoted to this footstool.

But some are, and so the wonderful spectacle then is afforded to the observer, of a man smiled upon, patted, petted, sugar-plummed, lifted up and pushed forward by mitred heads or nicely gloved hands, while the questions of spirituality, prayerfulness, steadfastness, faithfulness, Christlikeness, have not been considered at all, or, if thought of, regarded in a secondary light.

It is an easy thing to get up an ovation for a man who has done something, as we see in Dewey's case; but how impossible to make the nation act the same toward another admiral who did not do anything. Moreover, what a feeling of disgust and general protest there would be if the official heads of the government insisted upon such a public demonstration when the facts and achievements of the life would not justify such a display. This state of things would be the revolt of the mind against honor being placed where honor was not due, and that we were called upon to doff our hats and wave our hands in endorsement of what was really not character or a noble performance, but the life of a puppet, the creature of a small circle of people.

God also has favorites; but what a difference!

In two respects, however, they remind us of those who belong to kings and great men. First, they are not usually liked by the world. Secondly, the more they are disliked and abused by men the more God heaps His favors upon them. Just as kings have been known to heap fresh gifts upon their assaulted favorites, so God seems to rain His choicest blessings upon His servants who are made to suffer by the world. He seems to have a peculiar affection for them. Hence, while Stephen was being stoned to death, the Lord granted him such a vision of heaven and Himself and poured such glory in his soul that the martyr scarcely felt the rocks flung at him, and died in a holy rapture.

God evidently has favorites, as we see in the case of Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Elisha, Paul and John, and others whom secular history speaks of, and still others whom we have seen in the walks of life and personally know.

They have a shine on the face that not all Christians wear. They have quicker access to the throne; talk unbrokenly with God; never lose their inner joy; and are honored in every prayer, conversation and sermon by the Spirit of God. Men go to them for advice, they beg for their prayers, they request them to ask God to do such and such things for them. Evidently they see that these men and women are favorites of God; that they come in and go out before Him continually and have His ear upon all matters.

This is all true, but here the similarity ends. God has favorites, but they are chosen for reasons very different from those that men have in selecting theirs. Invariably and without a single exception God causes the man to stand nearest to Him who desires and decides to be like Him. The bloodwashed heart and perfectly obedient life will make any one a divine favorite. It is a favoritism, indeed, but it is one born of character.

It would be morally impossible for God to select men to stand near and wait on Him on the "pet system." Not only His character forbids this, but His word also is clear in the statement that "He is without partiality" and "no respecter of persons."

The question of good looks, wealth, social standing, culture and an oily tongue amounts to naught with God apart from religious character. It is simply nothing to Him whether we live on a boulevard or back alley, whether we dress in broadcloth or jeans, and whether we come from Virginia or Kamschatka.

God does not respect persons, but He does respect character. It is possible to be a favorite with the Lord if we come by the way of the Blood and Perfect Obedience. But the position never comes through human influence, and, above all, never accidentally. With a great sum men obtain this honor, a price indeed that many Christians are unwilling to pay.

“I would give the world,” said one Christian to another, “if I had the experience you have.”

“That is just what it cost me,” was the quick reply.

Men look in wonder at the spirit liberty, constant religious joy and holy unction that some of God’s servants possess. The temptation to the observer is that the Divine Being has pets, special favorites, etc., upon whom He delights to heap honor and favors in a public way. The real fact in the case is, that the publicly favored man has spent three to four hours on his face in prayer and communion with God. It has been another fulfillment of the words of the Savior, “Enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

Abel, Abraham, Moses, Wesley and Fletcher were all divine favorites, but not accidentally so. The first showed his faith in bringing the firstling of the flock to the altar; Abraham kept back nothing that he had from God; Moses surrendered the throne of Egypt and chose reproach with God’s people for the truth’s sake; Wesley spent three hours every day in prayer, and Fletcher gave four, while his face looked like that of an angel.

It is possible to be a favorite of God and very much hated by the world. Men do not like favorites either of earth or heaven. The first because unworthy, and the second because not understood. Blows, attacks and assaults of every kind will be heaped upon both characters or classes in spite of the great moral difference existing between them. And both, strange to say, will be, comforted by an identical thought or fact, and that is the consciousness of their acceptance with those who have selected them to stand near them.

History tells us that it was often impossible to shake the confidence of royalty in the favorites at court, no matter what was said about or done to them. This is even truer in the realm of grace. While Pilate was saying to Christ, “Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?” the favor of His Father and all heaven was filling the soul of the slandered One.

God's unclouded smile upon His servants while men detract and assail, inspires a strength, creates a confidence and joy, and brings about an invincibility of life that is a wonder to the world, a mystery to many Christians, but is a fact thoroughly understood by those who stand near to and well with the Lord. It is the hand of God on the life, the voice of God to the heart, the backing of the man himself by heaven itself; and having this, the man can face a frowning world, can stand where others go down, and become not only victor over life's battles and changing circumstances, but, as Paul puts it, become "more than conqueror."

It may pay, for some reasons, in this world to be the "pet" of some man or set of men; but life ends that kind of reward, while the character is undone. But to be one of God's "favorites" ranks us with the prophets and apostles, pays us abundantly in this world, and in the world to come brings life and glory everlasting.

CHAPTER 23

ONE-SIDEDNESS

In the vegetable and animal kingdom there is first a germ or principle of life, and then follows what is called development. It is noticed that organization does not produce life, but life, organization.

In the spiritual realm God has to do what He did in the lower kingdom, impart life and divine gifts, and then grant time for unfolding, expansion and general development. He imparts or plants spiritual life in the dead soul, and later purifies or sanctifies by the removal of an antagonistic nature, and filling the soul with the constant presence of the Holy Ghost. The work now before such a Christian is not an improvement in quality, but in quantity. The movement is one of growth in grace and knowledge, enlargement of every ransomed power and increase of the heavenly stock. There is to be an application of the inward truth and light to every outward condition; an agreement formed between experience and doctrine, and profession and practice.

This, of course, constitutes much of the spiritual education of life and the discipline of the providence of God. In this pursuit we have to live in prayer, follow the leadings of the Spirit, study the Word, take counsel of godly people and recognize the providential movements of God in the life.

The aim, or effort, is for the heavenly standard. Possessing pardon and holiness, we are trying to make the outward life conform to the inward one.

In this heavenly race, or course, some greatly outstrip others. Some are slow. Some have not been taught in a broad, thorough manner. Some have disadvantages to labor under that others do not, and so make little progress. Some get error mixed in with truth and the result at once becomes evident. In still other cases one or more of the great helps in the spiritual life are either overlooked altogether or not used as much as should be done. In other words, the Bible is unread or misread, the Spirit not followed or misunderstood, the will and providence of God not regarded, and the counsel and advice of God's people not taken.

The result in these instances is one-sidedness in the Christian life. For surely if a man is mistaken about the teachings of the Word, or the leadings

of the Spirit, there is certain to be wrong growth, fungous growth, abnormal growth, and, above all, one-sidedness of Christian character and life. This state of things will often first manifest itself in doctrine. Things not taught or commanded of God will be taken up and exacted of others. Forced and fanciful interpretations of Scripture will be resorted to, to defend the position. The result of this course, if persisted in, is found to be an increased confusion and darkness, with the dreadful likelihood of final shipwreck of faith and the soul itself.

In this way duties are put out of all proper relation to each other; and essential truths are actually set aside and forgotten in the thrusting forward of nonessentials. Lesser doctrines are exalted to an importance and a place that God never intended. Hence the endless controversies on the mode of baptism, the dress question, and other things too numerous to mention. It is certainly a lamentable sight to see a man use up most of his force in presenting the smaller matter of the gospel and scarcely touch the great majestic doctrines of our Christianity.

It was once whispered in a certain small denomination that a visiting preacher did not say as much against feathers and neckties as he should; and his stock could hardly have gone down swifter with that people than if he had broken several of the Ten Commandments.

Again, one-sidedness is seen in the spiritual life itself.

A number of years ago a man in a friendly way put his arms around the writer. We in good humor and feeling did the same to him, when we discovered, with a sensation akin to horror, that his left side was literally caved in. Whether he had been operated upon or was born that way we did not know; only that the arms, instead of feeling the roundness and firmness of the human form, went in upon nothing. The man's left side was collapsed, curved in, or had gone to nothing in some way, and so he was, truly speaking, a one-sided man.

Sooner or later we discover this spiritual lack, or character emptiness, on the part of people where we had looked for the real, true and solid. We crash into nothing where we had expected something.

The disciples showed this when they requested Christ to call down fire out of heaven and burn up a town. They had zeal on the right side, but on the left, where the heart is, they lacked pity and love; they were one-sided.

They showed this sickening lack again when they wanted certain servants

of Christ forbidden in their work because they went not with their crowd. Orthodox on one side, and without tolerance or even justice on the other; one-sided.

We heard one of our bishops say once that a certain steward in the church was unquestionably a good man, but he had no financial conscience. He was a loving, gentle, churchgoing man, seemed to enjoy religion, but never paid his debts. He was one-sided.

We heard a Christian say of another that he was liberal with his money and full of zeal for the cause of God, but if any one crossed his path or purposes, he would no more hesitate to crush such a man than others would an insect in their way. The man was one-sided.

Still again, we heard a preacher say of another, "He is a good man and a great preacher, but he must rule or ruin; he must be first or nothing; and if he had been a pope in the Romish church the world would have heard from him in a heartrending way.

It is a dreadful thing to put the arms of affection and confidence around a man and suddenly find a whole side of the Christian character and life gone. To feel for faithfulness and discover with a pang that it is not there. That love is not there. That reliability is not there.

A preacher, commenting upon another, said of him, that he had broken down in a certain quarter of his moral character. The words at once conjured to the mind the sight of a great city wall, the greater part intact and defended, but with an awful gap in one place where the enemy could rush through.

The "breakdown" may mean the loss of truth, purity or love. The man may have become a prevaricator, unclean in his thoughts, or bitter, fierce and intolerant. In either case there is the breakdown. It is only another word for one-sided. A goodly stretch of Christian wall is left, influence is exerted and work performed for the church, missions and temperance; but the let down, or breakdown, is there, and through it an army of devils may rush and capture everything at any moment.

We repeat that it is fearful for one to find that he has been loving and trusting what proves to be a delusion, a phantom, a half-man, a Christian with his side caved in.

It takes quite awhile for the soul to rally from the shock of the exposure and

loss, and to bear a pain that feels like the soreness of a personal bereavement.

There are people whom the reader would have trusted with anything, any confidence, even life itself; and yet the day comes when he suddenly awakes to find that he was leaning on a caved-in side, and devoted to a person who can as coolly stab him with tongue, pen or type as Brutus sank the dagger in the breast of his old-time friend.

One of the saddest-faced women we ever saw had that look of melancholy planted there for life by discovering that where she thought honor and purity existed in a friend, nothing but a big cave-in was to be found.

We knew once of a married couple who were building a house of happiness on the idea that the other possessed a religious experience. After months of such delusion, one day the crushing information was given, "Don't ask me about it — I have nothing." One can imagine the shock produced by this information. We met the party several times after that, and always with the appearance as if a deathblow had been given, and the sufferer was waiting in a kind of moral stupor for the end.

* * * * *

We draw three brief lessons from the facts above narrated.

First, if we are one-sided, let us go to God, who can make a spiritually whole man as well as a physical one, and beg Him to complete His work, and bring us to the fullness and completeness of Christ.

Second, if we have friends who are let down, broken down or one-sided on the spiritual side, do not let us give them up at once. He who made both sides can surely make another, if one gives way. Then let it not be forgotten that the Lord can raise the dead.

Third, if our hearts have been shocked and grieved by discovering caved in sides among our acquaintances and friends, still there is no need of casting away our confidence in all people, or of dying heartbroken and in despair. There is One who will never disappoint or fail us. The arms thrown around Christ in faith and love will find no let down, breakdown, or any kind of lack there, but an unchanging love and an everlasting faithfulness. Though every man be a liar, Jesus is true.

CHAPTER 24

RELIGIOUS PROFANITY

One of the Ten Commandments is, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” The violation of this law is called profanity. The general opinion is that it is only broken by unregenerated people. But a better understanding of the commandment reveals the fact that there are more profane people than one would at first imagine, and that many of the avowed friends and followers of Christ are transgressors here.

We are not alluding here to what is called wooden profanity, as plainly exhibited in the slamming of doors and knocking over of chairs: We have all heard the unmistakable oath in a violently shut door. It came not through the lips, but found egress and a strange, horrible relief in the bang of an inanimate portal or window.

Nor do we refer to that painful series of expressions of Pshaw! Bosh! Tut! Pooh! Bah! which are but outcroppings of an impatient, irritable spirit, and closely related by blood and marriage to the family of oaths.

Neither do we speak of utterances of a still grosser and more reprehensible nature, like My goodness! Goodness gracious! Lordy! Lord-a-mercy! etc. This is the beginning of evil, the pitching of the tent towards Sodom, the light artillery compared with the heavy ordnance of profanity. It is all wrong, adds nothing to the grace, beauty and proper force of language, is offensive to the spiritually minded, blunts the finer nature of the soul, grieves the Holy Spirit and prepares the way with many to still more objectionable expressions, if not finally to downright swearing.

But we have in mind still another class of the profane, who, being deeply spiritual and altogether given up to God, would be the last to believe and admit that they transgress in this manner. We refer here to those who use the name of the Lord in prayer and testimony with a frequency that is as needless as it is distressing to many Christians, and, we believe, is grievous to God Himself.

The Jews, filled with reverence for the Divine Being, exhibited it peculiarly in regard to one of His names, which they rarely, if ever, uttered. The Savior plainly warns against what He terms “vain repetitions;” and in His

gift to the church of what is called the Lord's Prayer, He brings in the name of God but once, and this in the opening sentence. We know, however, some religious people, who, according to the manner in which they pray and testify would have had the name of the Lord to appear in ejaculatory form one dozen times in that brief petition.

At a camp-meeting a lady used the Lord's name twenty-seven times in a prayer of as many sentences. We have known several young preachers and laymen to outstrip this record by calling on the Lord twice in a single sentence; as for instance, "O Lord, we come into Thy presence, O God."

Recently in a large holiness gathering we heard a sanctified brother deliver a twenty minutes' exhortation; and we solemnly affirm without any exaggeration that over one-third of what he said was made up of ejaculations of the Lord's name. With pain we give a specimen of his talk:

"I was an awful sinner, hallelujah to God! But Christ saved me, glory to God! He did a thorough work, bless the Lord! I stood alone, hallelujah to God! The devil was after me, praise the Lord! But I stood like an oak tree, hallelujah to God!" etc., etc.

For nearly a half hour this kind of testimony was poured into the suffering ears of the people. To describe the sensation of pain to mind and heart at hearing the name of the Divine Being thus heedlessly and needlessly pulled and hauled about would be indeed impossible. It was a taking of the name of the Lord in vain. It was religious profanity. The man was a good man, but had insensibly gotten into the habit of filling up his sentences with the names of Divinity, until they had become spiritual expletives and bywords.

Sometimes people are led into this habit from really not knowing what else to say. And sometimes the sweet joy that comes from this praising the Lord causes us to multiply these expressions on all occasions, until they become habits of speech, with no moral root in them, and no indication whatever of spiritual excellence and obtainment.

Who has not heard ejaculations of the kind we have mentioned coming from the congregation at the most inappropriate time? The preacher has just spoken of the backsliding of the soul, or of one who is on his way to hell, when here comes a volley of "Glory's to God" from the class of people we are writing about. The tender, holy utterance has become a set speech, and now means nothing, just as the profane sinner says in his excuse for taking God's name in vain, that "he did it thoughtlessly and meant nothing by it."

When the writer received the blessing of sanctification, he found himself, on account of the upwelling tenderness in his heart, continually disposed to say “God bless you” to everybody. He never dreamed that this speech could finally be learned by the lower part of the brain, which presides over the involuntary motions of the body, and that the utterance would eventually be repeated unconsciously. But to his surprise, on reviewing a stenographic report of one of his sermons, he found this “God bless you” appearing many times in the discourse, and saw that in most of the instances it had become a kind of crystallized form of speech, a repetition that was not needed, and added no force whatever to the truth which was being spoken.

The discovery opened his eyes and determined him to be more watchful; just as he trusts that this chapter will have the same happy effect on others, who with pure hearts and godly lives have allowed themselves to make an ejaculation or byword out of the holy name of the Creator.

There is nothing in this chapter that is intended to check praises to God. It is well known that the writer firmly believes in audible praises in the great congregation. He is simply uttering a word of warning to those who are in danger of making an expletive out of the name of the Lord, and of using repetitions in prayer and testimony that the Holy One Himself calls vain.

CHAPTER 25

HINDRANCES

In the life of the Christian there may be encountered two kinds of obstructions or withstandings; one from God and the other from the great enemy. If the follower of Christ, through ignorance or perversity, should be taking a wrong course, there will be warnings and blocking ups of the path on the part of heaven. So we see an angel sent out to meet Balaam and with waving sword attempting to drive him back. The poor dumb brute falls down, the foot of the erring prophet is crushed against the wall, the sword is waved, and a miraculous rebuke is given in vain to the infatuated Balaam. The man pushed on through God's withstandings to his ruin.

Another very different class of obstructions come from the devil, who would oppose the soul in its religious experiences and great life work. So we hear Paul saying there is a great and effectual door opened unto me, but there are many adversaries. Not only are such gateways of opportunity and achievement darkened and surrounded by hellish presences, but the road leading up to the portal is dotted and sometimes lined with obstructions of various kinds to prevent the arrival and success that seems imminent.

It is remarkable how quickly the soul itself, when in proper spiritual condition, can distinguish between these opposing forces.

The conscience when guilty and heavy laden regards every rustling leaf, every snapping twig, as the approaching footsteps of the divine judge and punisher. On the other hand, when the soul walks continually in the light with God, not only breaking sticks and shaking bushes are powerless to disturb and divert from the way of duty, but the appearance and the roaring of lions themselves cannot stop such a man. The obstruction is recognized as coming from the Pit. The opposition, the backset, the delay, the apparent confusion, with successive discouragements, are all correctly seen, properly regarded and treated as the hindrance and withstanding of the devil, who would oppose and bring to naught every good word and work of God.

What an unspeakable relief and source of strength this is to the man of God! With his anointed eye and clarified vision, he can properly distinguish and decide in these critical moments of conflict and labor. He pierces the disguise of the devil; he sees beneath the appearance of an angel of light the

black form of the tempter; he recognizes what a hasty judgment would call a providential obstruction to be one of the barricades of the adversary; he is not terrorized by the wands of the magicians nor frightened at the lions, for he perceives that the roaring beasts of the Pit are chained; he is allowed to see the shortness of the chain; and through all the din and uproar of rival forces he heard the voice of his Shepherd and Leader.

In a cluster of meetings once held by the writer, and which were among the most powerful and successful of his evangelistic life, he was struck with the many backsets, hindrances, discouragements and oppositions flung in his way. If he had not had in his soul the constant whisper of the Spirit, the abiding smile of Christ, he must have been not only a prey to many fears, but actually have succumbed and given up the fight in those particular places.

The graver difficulties we do not mention, as their narration might seem to reflect on certain persons who are still living. If this article could be penned twenty years from now, we could tell as remarkable and startling things about individuals as ever Dr. Finney did in his memoirs. A grave difference between the two being that when that evangelist wrote his recollections nearly everybody of whom he wrote had passed away from this life. But in the case of the writer nearly everybody is living connected with the cases to which he refers.

A glance then at the minor difficulties will have to suffice to illustrate the thought of this chapter.

In meeting No. 1, as we will call it, and while on the train coming as fast as we could to the city in question, my right thumb was almost mashed flat in one of the heavy doors of a Pullman sleeping coach. The anguish was so great that for minutes I thought I would not only faint, but grow frantic. I was assisted to a seat, and several passengers did what they could for me with such little remedies as they had along. It was too serious an injury, however, for witch hazel or Pond's Extract, and my unrestrainable groans touched many pitiful hearts, and a telegram went forward notifying certain parties of the accident and my inability to fill the pulpit next morning.

The train was, from some cause, delayed for several hours, and when at last I arrived in the town no one was at the depot to meet me. Exhausted as though by a spell of long sickness, I went at two o'clock at night to a hotel. On the door of my room was a brass lock, which had been rubbed and polished so that one edge was as sharp as a keen knife. In getting up in the night to attend to the throbbing right thumb, and in feeling my way to a side

table, I brought my left thumb down with all its force upon the edge of the brass lock, and cut the finger to the bone.

Here I was now, expected to open a meeting next day, and, lo! both hands all tied up. The devil doubtless rejoiced as he saw the question of gesticulation was settled. How could a man move around two bandaged thumbs with any but a ludicrous effect on the audience?

The next misfortune was a blow at the articulation itself. For in almost one of the first services I was exposed to a draught, so that for twenty-four hours afterwards I was in bed with a splitting headache and burning fever, and with the voice reduced to a whisper.

All these things seemed to be against the meeting. But through these and still other discouragements there was a constant inward assurance that God was going to bring everything out all right, and give a glorious victory.

The thumbs got well, the throat healed, and in that meeting we had 150 souls converted and sanctified!

In meeting No. 2 some of the minor troubles were a fighting physician, a holiness woman who would gather her skirts and step over the altar rail which was two and a half feet high, and the constant slamming of the side entrance door, which made everybody look up and around at each arrival. Such turning of heads and twisting of necks we have never seen equaled as we were compelled to behold for ten days. We thought much of the architect and of the building committee who would contrive such an annoyance, and accept such an abomination in the construction of a house of worship as the placing of the main entrance in the side of the building.

The amount of nerve agony produced on speakers and preachers alone, in that church, would have been sufficient to have placed them in the calendar of the martyrs.

As for the high-stepping sister, we never saw her perform that ecclesiastical gymnastic piece of exercise in one of the services, but we felt with inward groanings that the meeting had been put back another day in power and best results.

And yet in spite of the sister's pedal performance, the fighting doctor, the slamming door, and a number of other distressing and unfortunate things, the revival came at last, and we had over one hundred souls converted, reclaimed and sanctified.

CHAPTER 26

ODDITIES

Some people are born odd. In their mental make-up something is supposed to have been acquired or lost, when really something has been lacking from the start. An intellectual screw seems to be loose, the main-spring is weak, a balance wheel is gone, and the result is such in the life that people pronounce the aforesaid individual to be queer.

This queerness, if not affected, is not a man's fault, but his misfortune. It is an inheritance, an accident of birth, a failure upon the part of nature, one of the many melancholy features of the fall in the Garden of Eden. It can be ameliorated and made tolerable in some respects by education, culture and the grace of God, but the perfect deliverance therefrom can only be realized in the resurrection. We can get a perfect heart on earth, but it will require heaven to possess a perfect head.

When a being is born odd, no matter whether he becomes pious or remains sinful, no matter what pursuit or business he adopts, no matter whether he is found in the commercial, political, social, literary, ecclesiastical or religious world, he will still be a queer character. The term used these days to describe such a person is crank.

Now it is a great mistake and grave reflection on the Christian religion to say that it produces cranks. While it occasions the lonely, misunderstood life, the walk separate from sin, and above all compromise, yet if any thing gives a sound and healthy mind, it is the salvation of the Son of God. Paul is unmistakable here in his epistle to Timothy.

The church and the holiness movement claim no monopoly of what are called queer geniuses and cranks. The oddest people the writer ever knew were outside of Christ and the church. They inherited something, or were born lacking something in their intellectual machinery. Some rivet was gone, some screw needed tightening, some band had slipped, a cog was absent, and now, no matter where they appeared, no matter what trade, profession or calling they followed, there was such an exhibition of mannerisms, peculiar habits, strange ways of thinking, speaking and doing, as to elicit smiles, nudges, nods, and winks from all sides, with the frequent sententious remark, "crank."

People with curious ways of doing things are not confined to the humble and lowly. The odd streak is seen seaming the life of the distinguished and great. When beheld in the exalted and wealthy, the term “crank” is dropped and euphemistic expressions are used, such as, “he is so original,” “has marked characteristics,” “is a social iconoclast,” “so refreshingly independent,” etc.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, with all his wisdom and learning, had a strange way of touching trees as he walked along a road or street. If he missed one he would go back and lay his hand on the slighted trunk before resuming his walk. Had he happened to have been a religious man, especially a believer in entire sanctification, how holiness would have been scored and denounced, and how he would have been dubbed a crank, a person losing his mind, etc. But as he was not in the salvation life and work, people simply smiled over the queer habit, and called it “one of the doctor’s ways.”

Of course a born oddity carries his oddities with him when he becomes a Christian. Religion does not change the intellect. The grace of God does not give us a new set of brains, but a new heart, and after that a pure heart. The perfect rectification of the intellect does not take place in regeneration or in sanctification, but in glorification, which last all to be desired work occurs on the other side of the grave.

Until then we will have to bear with the odd brother; yes, a little nearer still, bear with each other. There is nothing else to be done.

Queer and cranky people obtain religion. Unfortunately for the cause of Christ their strange ways, like their garments, go with them; and it is the oddity which always first strikes the observer. They are religious, but are peculiarly religious. They are Christian oddities; their religious experience being one thing, and their peculiarities another.

Men naturally lament, bewail and groan over the latter, but it is the opinion of the writer that the religious oddity, with all his eccentricities, is a thousand times better and more to be desired than the irreligious crank.

We repeat that the salvation of the Son of God does not make a man odd and cranky, according to the meaning and use of that term today. It is true that to many people a holy man will appear singular. A person who pleases God in all things, and whether he eats, drinks or sleeps does all to the glory of God, will undoubtedly be a strange character to the great multitude. It

was Mr. Wesley who said that a man had to be singular in this world or be damned. But by that word singular he did not mean what is known by the terms queer and eccentric. The singularity he referred to, and that the Bible teaches, we may well all desire and strive after. For the strangeness of a holy life is one thing, and the eccentricity of unsound hearts and unbalanced minds is another. The world's queer geniuses and God's peculiar people are two very different classes of beings.

Mr. Wesley once by invitation paid a visit to Dr. Samuel Johnson. After half an hour the former looked at his watch and excused his leaving the latter with the words that he was under promise to call and pray with a poor sick woman. Dr. Johnson was astonished, and afterward said that the man (Mr. Wesley) was fairly charming him when he jumped up and left him to pay a visit to some old, unknown creature up an obscure street.

The reader in this simple occurrence sees the difference in the two men. One to be quiet in his mind had to go back and with superstitious fingers touch a tree; the other to ease his heart and bless still another, walked back over a mile to touch an old sick woman with the hand of prayer.

Truly, there are great dissimilarities here. It is one thing to be a hermit and recluse from a selfish sorrow or misconception of the Christian religion, and it is another in the name and spirit of Christ to be in the world and yet not of the world. God's peculiar man, and the odd, cranky man are two very different beings, and represent two very dissimilar characters and lives.

And yet we see cranks seeking and obtaining religion. God will not shut a man out of salvation because of mental defects and strange outlandish manners. He that repents and believes shall be saved, and he that consecrates perfectly and believes shall be sanctified, no matter what has been the lack of education and training, or the failure of nature to endow and beautify the mind with finishing, completing touches.

But the natural and inevitable outcome of this goodness and justice of God is that the church is certain to have a crop of queer geniuses on hand. The holiness movement will have more than a full share, on the principle that a fire in the woods brings all kinds of strange birds and animals out of the bushes, to see what is going on.

The Bible says that when Moses led the children of Israel up out of Egypt, "a mixed multitude" came with them. After the crossing of the Red Sea, they are never mentioned again. We have thought sometimes that they were

drowned. If so, the Red Sea did more for the people of God than was at first supposed.

This we know, however, that the “mixed multitude” in the church and in the holiness movement has not been drowned; and it is their intellectual errors, fanaticisms, extremisms, oddities and offensive peculiarities which bring many a harsh judgment and cruel blow upon the holiness cause and people of God, that otherwise could not and would not be struck.

We have not the space in this chapter to hang up some of the portraits of the characters we now speak of, and that are well known to so many of our readers. We conclude in substance as we began, that a religious oddity is not a person made queer by religion, but he is simply an eccentric character who has obtained religion.

CHAPTER 27

NUMBERING ISRAEL

David got into great trouble through numbering Israel. In his case pride was at the bottom, and grievous was the penalty inflicted upon him for the sin. Instead of feeling that the Lord was his strength and defense, his eye became fastened on the populous tribes, and that wonderful army of a million men, which Israel had in her borders under more than one king. He became fascinated in the study of the glittering ranks of soldiers, and the numerous cities on all sides, and so to be certain about it, to know just how mighty he was, he ordered a census to be taken. Now it is not sinful in itself to take a census, but the spirit which inspired David to do it was wrong. And so that counting of heads caused nearly one hundred thousand of his people to go into the grave.

This chapter is not written to dwell upon the history of David's sin and the divine judgment; but to use the thought suggested in another way.

The desire to number Israel is still prevalent. As a procedure it is often undertaken in a spirit of vanity and pride, and the remarkable feature about it is, that it is always a failure. Just as David did not get the right number in his day, so men in the present century always miss the correct figures.

Who believes, in the first place, that the two great branches of Methodism have three and a half millions, and one and a quarter million of members? Many of them are even now in eternity. Many never come to church, some even say that they never joined at all, while great numbers never darken the door of our houses of worship. If the Gideon's sifting process was applied, how the figures would shrink to that of a corporal's guard.

But leaving all this, it does seem a curious and amazing thing that when men get to numbering Israel they immediately seem to lose their senses. Perfectly reliable on all other questions and matters, the moment this thing transpires, they all seem to become mathematically insane, and are genuine arithmetical lunatics.

Graver still, while of unquestionable probity, and true in all other matters, they will tell deliberate stories when it comes to numbering Israel. Some people call it lying. We think, however, that term is too strong. Instead we

would suggest the expression “mathematically insane.”

Under this peculiar affliction, it is simply impossible to obtain right numbers and correct reports from preachers and laymen about congregations and meetings. The disease seems to affect the eye, judgment and numerative faculty of the worker. He sees double.

It is remarkable that he never underrates the size of an audience, nor underestimates the results of a revival. It is all the other way; he magnifies and multiplies. The eye of such an one is never betrayed into looking into the large, but always the small end of the spy-glass, so that things necessarily look large. The judgment, when it comes to counting, always moves on crescendo lines. The mind abhors such trifling things as addition and fractions, and leaps at once clear over into arithmetical and geometrical proportion, and runs riot therein.

With such a man fifty people is a “splendid audience.” When one or two individuals are in pews that can accommodate five or six, he reports “a full house.” When four occupy each bench, we are told next day that “the house was crowded.”

When Brother Census reports his meetings, then we are called upon to notice some real first-class fancy work. We are informed that never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant was there such a meeting seen in that part of the country, such prayers delivered, such sermons heard, and so many at the altar, and so many converted and sanctified. Not less than five hundred were saved and sanctified, etc.

Older heads, and those who are nearer the grave and judgment seat, brought the figures down to one hundred. They labored, however, under the disadvantage of not wearing certain mental glasses, through which twenty persons appear to be eighty and one hundred look to be five hundred.

Not long ago we heard a man say that at one of John S. Inskip’s meetings five hundred preachers obtained the blessing of entire sanctification. We never for an instant believed that this brother meant to tell a story, but saw that he had that remarkable disease called “Numbering Israel,” in which the mind and sight are so affected, that figures get in a swirl and jumble, rolling and tumbling over each other in the most remarkable manner, and then falling into such an order as to produce the most amazing results.

Two other evangelists and the author were called to labor some few years since at a camp-meeting. One of these workers and the writer concluded

that about one hundred and twenty-five souls had been converted and sanctified, and we so reported it in our letter to the religious papers. To our surprise we found that the third brother also had a letter in the same journals, and his report was four hundred and fifty souls saved and sanctified. Any one can see that he simply had a touch of the Numbering Israel fever.

A strange disease it is! A man who has it can count very well everywhere else except when he confronts a church or tabernacle crowd, and estimates revival results. He makes no mistake in numbering the dollars paid him for his services, the days he can stay, the meal tickets he has purchased, etc., but the instant he faces an audience, or starts to counting people at the altar, on summing up results, he grows perfectly insane and one becomes a thousand, and two small ones a strong nation.

We have heard preachers laughing over these reports, saying that they had come to the town or city where four, five and six hundred conversions and sanctifications had been reported as the result of a meeting just closed, and yet they could not find a vestige of the work.

They did not seem to understand it, were disposed to think some stretching of the blanket had been indulged in, until we informed them about this strange disease called "Numbering Israel." We told them how through ignorance and carelessness we had touches of it ourself, and had to go to the fountain and get our eyes treated, and have our numerative faculty adjusted by the spirit of Perfect Truth.

We once had a brother write to us that he had a tent for us in which to hold the meetings; that he had used it a few times, and it would seat twelve hundred people, while fifteen hundred could be crowded under its protecting canvas. When we arrived, we sat on the platform, counted the seats, and found room for just two hundred and fifty people, and another hundred could not possibly have been crowded under. The brother was a good man, but had the Numbering Israel disease. By reading the Bible, praying much, and thinking some of Ananias and Sapphira, people can recover from this malady. Who has not read the report, and heard statements about some of our second and third class sized camp-meetings, that ten thousand people were on the ground! Such people ought really to see ten thousand people together once and then they would not make a second mistake on this line.

At one of our camp-grounds several of the Board informed the evangelist that the year before the attendance reached ten or twelve thousand on the

Sabbath. That year the gathering equaled the preceding one, and the evangelist, not having the numbering delirium, discovered with a little patient investigation that not quite eleven hundred people were present on the big day.

Who has not seen Brother Coolhead with a single remark knock off the plumes and bring down the feathers of Brother Census?

Brother Census had preached that night, and came into the house radiant, and reporting to a few that did not get out to the tabernacle that “he had a tremendous crowd, fully one thousand people present, and the altar was packed with not less than forty or fifty persons.”

Later on Brother Coolhead came in, being entertained at the same dwelling. How provokingly calm he seemed in view of such wonderful things. As he took his seat some one said, “You had a great audience tonight and a big altar full.” “Yes,” he said, with a pleasant smile, ‘I did quite an unusual thing tonight, and counted the crowd while the choir was singing, and we had three hundred and sixty people in the tabernacle, and seventeen penitents at the altar.’”

Brother Census looked pensive at this, and soon after went to bed. When Brother Coolhead was told how his statements collided with those of Brother Census, he was genuinely grieved, and found, to his sorrow, that one cannot count Israel even properly without getting into trouble.

We once had living in our mother’s family a little nephew, aged about six years. He was possessed of a most vivid imagination, and it was truly wonderful what Willie would see in a simple morning walk attended by his nurse.

One day he came in from a short stroll of three or four blocks and reported, with eager manner and sparkling eyes, that he had seen twenty dead mules in a ditch. This was, to say the least, quite a remarkable find for an ordinary outing, and so the family looked at once to the nurse for confirmation. But she, with an amused look, shook her head. Afterwards, when Willie had retired somewhere, she told us that the foundation for the wonderful story was part of the sun-bleached skeleton of an old cow whose demise had taken place long months ago.

A piece of fancy work on the part of a child, that was doing very well to take a few bones, and make twenty dead mules out of them, and all in a row, for convenient numbering.

Another time Willie reported that he had seen five hundred dogs on the public square all at the same time.

A certain member of the family quietly sat down by the lad and indulged in a prolonged effort to get him to drop his figures. In a couple of minutes Willie fell to four hundred dogs.

The relative, somewhat encouraged, told the lad that while dogs were numerous, yet he could not see how, on such a sudden notice, so many delegates could have been secured to this unmistakable dog convention.

At once Willie dropped to two hundred and fifty, but gave signs that he would not yield another inch, or rather dog.

But under considerable reasoning and urging, and by telling him how people needed their dogs at home, and how they were kept there behind high fences, and with chains and blocks; and after dwelling somewhat upon the dramatic history of Ananias and Sapphira, Willie fell to two hundred, one hundred and fifty, one hundred, fifty, twenty-five, ten, five, and finally to one dog.

From this standpoint it looked like we would never budge him. But blood was up, so to speak, and after several more appeals to conscience the now thoroughly humbled boy admitted that all he saw was a dog's tail whisked around the corner.

Willie is still living and has made a noble man and possesses a lovely character. He never became a preacher, however, or an evangelist. If he had, no doubt the millennium would have been here and the whole world converted and sanctified long ago — that is, according to Willie's figures.

CHAPTER 28

DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES

It matters not how a man may live, he will have enemies. To be a sinner is to make them, while to be a Christian develops a new class not the less powerful, bitter and relentless.

The fact of correct and holy living will not relieve people in this matter of enemies. Paul prayed to be delivered from unreasonable men, and tells of his foes among false brethren. Jesus, the perfect man, had in His track, like relentless bloodhounds, many who were high in ecclesiastical position and eloquent in religious profession.

From these two instances alone we gather that it does not take sin to make an enemy; that we need not wrong a person to fill him with bitterness and wrath toward us. Stephen, with the heart of a saint and the face of an angel, had men gnashing their teeth upon him in a perfect fury.

Some Christians have been much shocked and puzzled over the fact of human hatred, and feared they had been lacking in certain respects as to conversation, spirit and action, thus to have aggrieved their critics, judges and would-be executioners. This naturally led to special effort to please, which seemed to result in still greater failure, and to widen the chasm already broad enough.

Of course, we could explain some of the causes of this bitterness in the existence of prejudice, misunderstanding, unjust accusation, slander, etc. But still after all that there remains the dreadful fact that some people will be undeservingly one's enemies. "They hated me without a cause," said Christ; and such things still take place in human lives.

In addition to terrestrial enemies, we have the devil-world against us. We do not stop to inquire into this strange enmity to a race that has given no cause for such a dreadful hatred. That the awful malevolent feeling is there we know, not only from the Word of God, and the fearful confirmations of history, but from an indescribable realization of the fact from the impingement or direct personal attack of devils upon the soul. They would harass, trouble and ruin upon earth, and damn us forever in hell.

The promise in the Bible is that God has an experience for us which will deliver us from “the hand of our enemies.” It does not say we shall be delivered from their presence and attacks, but from their “hand.”

The hand in Scripture stands for power. So the word is, we shall be delivered from their power.

Most of us remember our inactivity and helplessness in the days of terrible temptations when we only knew the grace of regeneration. We had not learned the secret of resisting and routing the devil. We were often made dumb and numb by his attacks. There were times we actually became sick by his fearful assaults and brooding upon the soul. The tongue was paralyzed, the heart sank like lead, the hands drooped, the feet were rooted to the ground. We were under the hand or power of our enemies.

According to Zacharias, God has sworn with an oath that we shall possess a blessing which will deliver us from this awful affliction. The string upon which Satan played is removed, the panicky nature upon which he operated is burned up, the territory he stood upon is blown up, and better still, Jesus, the conqueror of devils, abides perpetually within the soul.

So the Satanic presence and attack may be still felt, but the old-time crushing influence is gone. The “hand” does not rest upon us and press us down as of yore.

The same wonderful deliverance is seen in regard to human enemies. We get into such a relation with God that they are powerless to oppress and overwhelm us, as in other days.

Preachers have members in their congregations whose looks and very presence have been torture to them while they preached. A pair of black beetle brows gathered as the sermon proceeded, or the side of a disgusted face was turned to the pulpit, and the servant of God floundered through his message. They were prominent people and entertained the bishop or presiding elder when they came to town. Their hand laid upon one was felt to be a great weight. Underneath the palm pressure of these unconverted people, the regenerated man in the pulpit twisted, writhed, groaned and labored.

In lay circles a like distress is seen and felt from people who are fault-finding, suspicious, censorious, easily provoked and alienated, generally disagreeable, and once offended, perfectly implacable and bent on revenge.

With simply the grace of regeneration it is not to be wondered at that some of God's servants feel that were such individuals encountered almost daily in the home, social set and church circle, both labor and life would be comparative failures, if not altogether in vain. We doubt not that many firmly believe that they can never be what they desire in the Christian life while certain people live. If they were dead and buried and out of the way, they could be good, useful or successful, as the case might be.

Evidently the "hand" or power of these unfriendly parties rests upon these lives. They are pressed down and held in this condition.

The blessing of holiness is a glorious escape and deliverance from all this suffering and woe. There is a grace God gives the soul when we do not need that a single enemy be laid away in the cemetery to secure perfect religious liberty and a happy life. We can be delivered from the hand or power of every one of them.

Not only can God put the soul where the tongue of detraction and slander shall lose its bitter force on the heart of the victim, but He can also take care of the falsehood or slander. In both cases the Christian is delivered. These two deliverances may not walk hand in hand, but both are promised and will come, though one is beheld before the other. The second may tarry for reasons that commend themselves to any thinking mind, but the first can be enjoyed continually. God can in some indescribable way cast the curtains of His pavilion about the soul so as to hide it from the wrath and pride of man and from the strife of tongues. He places it in the secret of His presence, and lo! the arrows of human hate cannot find or reach it. The long promised deliverance sworn to Abraham and his spiritual posterity of believers has come; the hands of our enemies are lifted from us in their old-time crushing and tormenting power. The husband reaches a spiritual spot where the unspiritual wife cannot offend him as before. The wife has gotten where the abusive, scolding tongue of the husband fails to torment her any more.

The life may be a public one, but David views it even there and it is still canopied with this marvelous grace, as he describes it in the words, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

CHAPTER 29

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

This is an age of knowledge. Speakers and lecturers are on every hand, books and magazines issue in endless lines, and papers flutter like a snowstorm upon the land.

People are fully posted on many things. A great deal has been learned about the stars, planets, winds, currents, customs of nations, distant people, sects, parties, famous individuals, etc., etc. It actually seems to be the fashion to know much of some things and a little about everything. So knowledge is increased, and of the making of books there is no end. An ignorant man is without excuse in these days of study help, and manifold methods of truth dissemination.

Meantime, while the fields of astronomy, geology, history and theology are being run over and mastered, there is a branch of knowledge which is as little understood as it was ages ago. Though full of interest it is very painful. Though all important, the study is connected with such intense humiliations of spirit that few enter the course and take up the textbooks. We refer to self-knowledge.

The course of study is attended with peculiar difficulties; the mind, naturally inclined to other kinds of learning, is opposed to the acquisition of this; then the heart, which is involved, is deceitful, and the spirit itself, which we would know, is full of mystery.

It is far more important that a man should be posted here than to know Greek and Hebrew. Better far to understand himself than to have all the arts and sciences at his fingers' ends, and all that the theologians write at his tongue's end. But because of the difficulties partly alluded to, there are few who desire to enter the class, and precious few, indeed, who will take the whole course and graduate.

So, while navigation, mechanics, the arts, and war itself are loaded down with new discoveries, the human heart plods along in the mud and through the night of a gross ignorance of itself. Compositions are written, and addresses are read and delivered from the well-worn theme, "Know Thyself," and yet still the darkness on that subject is profound.

Preachers tell us we must know ourselves; and prayers from the pew beseech God to show us ourselves, when the fact is, if He did so, some would not believe the revelation, others would be infuriated, and still others would be paralyzed with horror.

There are but three ways for a man to get to know himself truly. One is through the description God gives of him in the Bible; second, by the revealings of the Holy Spirit; and third, by the providence of God.

The first dealing is escaped by most men in their refusal to read or listen to the Word of God. The second divine method is likewise hindered by the man's avoidance of the conditions through which the Holy Ghost operates, viz., spiritual meditation, prayer and worship. The third seems to be the one method which he cannot fly from, and that is the providence of God.

In other words, God, by the use of the conditions and circumstances of a man's life, its changing events, various happenings, diversified relations, reveals the man to himself. It may take time, but sooner or later the Almighty grinds this knowledge into the individual; his own words being made to declare him; and his actions becoming a mirror to reflect unmistakably his moral image.

God tempts no man, but tests and trials are placed along the years, or are allowed to rise up, not only for the purpose of bringing strength and development, but of self-revelation.

A man's life is the man himself, his deeds declaring him. This is so true that the Bible says he shall be judged for the deeds done in the body. On the same principle our courts of justice act today, feeling that the act was the outward expression or manifestation of the being on the inside. A mirror shows the physical form, but the deeds or actions reveal the character life, the soul nature, or the real man.

We once knew a wealthy and prominent member of the church who was besought to join with the congregation to which he belonged in an effort to pay the salary of the preacher and meet other expenses. His refusal to assist was based on the plea that he was financially unable. The same day he paid over one thousand dollars for an empty honor of a single night in a dress parade, and gave two hundred and fifty dollars for a beautiful mirror. The large pier glass was hung in his parlor, and he stood before it admiringly for a few minutes, and went away not knowing what manner of man he was. The glass could reveal flesh and blood, but could not reflect character.

The mirror of Divine Providence does this wonderful work. The conduct of a person, his bearing and spirit under certain provocations, his deliberate acts in certain circumstances, reflect or throw out into full view the hidden man of the heart. Truth stands by, and with pointing finger says, "There you are," "That is your true self."

Some would say that not every deed is a true looking-glass. Some performances are gone through with for the benefit of the public, or because the eye of the community is on one. But even then truth whispers to the man of the outwardly correct conduct, as he studies his reflection in the deed, "Now you are a deceiver," "What a hypocrite you are."

Deeper still, it takes certain conditions and circumstances of life for a man to thoroughly know himself. He may for years have been tested and tempted on lines where he was strongest and where there was no natural predisposition to yield. The peculiar situation, the overwhelming circumstance has not yet come. He does not yet know the weak place in his character. The event which is to expose the vulnerable spot and open his eyes is months or years down the future. The individual who is to so deeply affect the life is not now known, and has never been met. The trial has never been dreamed of, and the possibility of so distressing a bereavement has never entered the mind.

Meantime the testing day or circumstance is approaching, while he speaks glibly of self-knowledge, thanks God he is not like other men, and is exceedingly severe in criticism and judgment of people who have erred in one way or the other, and so displeased him in what he thought were unassailable points, when the fact is that he has himself simply been unassailed. He has killed a few catamounts, but a lion is running down the forest path to meet him. He has done well in a Soudanese and East Indian campaign, but a South African warfare is coming. He defeated an Arab chief of the desert, but there is a Joubert approaching who trained under a Stonewall Jackson.

In other words, the real declaring circumstances of life are in the near or remote future. A mirror is being constructed down the road, which, when complete, will show him all over and through and through. The glass is being ground now, and the quicksilver is ready to be applied. The frame will be made of most unexpected combinations of events. The angle of hanging will be remarkable and the reflection will be true and memorable forever. The astonished look, the sinking of the heart, the sense of humiliation over character weakness will all be there in that never to be

forgotten revealing transaction.

God owes it to us to show ourselves to ourselves. He knows us, but we must also have that knowledge. Various are the reasons for this manifestation.

Some men need to have the strut and swagger taken out of them. Some need to be arrested in their boasting. Souls need to be saved and sanctified. For these things to take place men must see themselves. All of us need more pity and charity. A good way to increase the stock is for God to hang up a few mirrors around us. The Spirit calls attention to our own thoughts, words and deeds, and bids us remember that only a few months or years ago we condemned others for the same utterances and the identical kind of conduct.

Men think they have faith; God owes it to the deluded ones to bring them into circumstances of peculiar trial where the opportunity is given to prove the existence of the virtue they boast of possessing. If their claim turns out to be false, it is better to discover the mistake here than at the Judgment.

Some think they are resigned to the will of God in all things. This is often assumed before there has been a death in the family. Alas! how often the bereavement which finally comes is of such a nature that the heart becomes bitter and the life estranged from God. The sorrow then becomes the mirror, and Truth with melancholy eyes stands by and with silent, pointing finger shows the real man or woman, back of all those brave words uttered in the cloudless days of early life.

In like manner our fancied love is made to shrivel, and purity itself gets a shock from the faithful reflection of declaring circumstance.

In all this strange and painful education of the soul on the part of God, not a word is spoken by the Divine Being. The mirrors are set up and pulled down voicelessly and noiselessly. If we refuse to look into one, another is prepared for us. We find them in corners and unexpected places. They seem to increase in number as the years go by, until at last the truth flashes upon us that the walls of life are lined by them, and that to ourselves and to three worlds we are constantly being revealed.

CHAPTER 30

THE TWO VERDICTS

There are two judgments going the rounds about the holiness people. The opinions arrived at come from taking a near or remote view, and from the possession of the carnal or spiritual mind. Very different are the conclusions, and both sides are convinced they are correct. The adverse side is the stronger party numerically, but the favor of God seems to be unquestionably with the condemned people.

It is remarkable that the very words of the two diverse opinions are to be found in the sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians. It seems that the apostle endured the same treatment, and underwent a misjudgment similar to that which God's people are called to undergo today. It is Paul who wrote about "going on unto perfection" and being "sanctified wholly," and it is this fact that may account for a treatment he received which sounds and reads wonderfully familiar to us at this remote time.

One charge is that we are "deceivers."

This is uttered on many sides; the opinion being that we are not only deceived ourselves, but are deceiving others.

There is comfort in remembering that this same thing was said of Christ: "He deceived the people." The like accusation was afterward made against the disciples, and is now directed upon the holiness movement. "They are deceiving the dear people." Oh, the dear people! How suddenly dear they become sometimes.

What did Christ do and say to them who heard him? He taught them to be perfect even as their Father in heaven was perfect. What said the apostles? Paul will answer for all. "whom we teach (i. e., Christ) that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." What truths are the holiness people trying to impress on the church? That the blood of Christ can cleanse us from all sin, and that this experience of heart purity, perfect love, or holiness can be received by faith in a moment's time. They do not say that the blessing supersedes growth in grace, and that condition of maturity which comes only with time and the faithful teaching of the Holy Spirit. Pardon, purity, maturity are recognized by them in the spiritual order as

written, the first two as God's direct work, the third as a result. For this testimony and teaching comes the charge of "deceived" and "deceivers."

In the next breath Paul affirms that he is "true." And we as firmly declare the same of the sanctified people. They are true to their fellowmen in declaring to them their privileges in Christ. True to the Methodist Church, which teaches in hymnbook, catechism, discipline, and the writings of Wesley, Watson, Benson, Clarke, Fletcher and many other accepted authors, that sanctification or holiness of heart is obtainable in this present life by an act of consecration and faith. True to the bishops of the church in a recent quadrennial address, where they affirm "that the privilege of believers to attain unto the state of entire sanctification or perfect love, and to abide therein, is a well-known teaching of Methodism." True to the Bible, which says we can be "sanctified wholly" and "preserved blameless" in soul, body and spirit unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. True to their own souls and consciences, when, in face of doubt, ridicule and opposition, they lovingly, firmly and persistently declare to all around what Christ has done for them. They have not hidden the truth from the great congregation. Gratitude to God, and love for men, and loyalty to Christ constrain them to constant and burning testimonies.

They are "deceivers and yet true." Here is the double verdict: the world's mistaken idea and heaven's faithful judgment. The expression would read well upon the holiness banner as a faithful description of the genuinely sanctified. Another twofold judgment is seen in the words "unknown and yet well known."

The sanctified man is certainly an unknown being in the sense of being a mystery and puzzle in his experience to his regenerated brethren. There is a secret of the Lord not known to all Christians. A white stone is given to certain overcomers in the church with a name written therein which many do not know. So the possessor of the mysterious grace walks a stranger in a sense, in his own church and home.

He is also unknown in many assemblies, in certain pleasures and pursuits, and in a number of ecclesiastical positions and dignities. He is not drawn to preachers Monday meetings, shrinks from talkative conventions, and feels like a stranger indeed at Chautauqua annual gatherings.

But he is "well known" for all that. The poor and sick and troubled know him well. His form is frequently seen in abodes of want and wretchedness. He does not appear there as a kind of social phenomenon, hushing the awestruck, ragged children into a wondering silence as they mark the

glittering gold watch chain and shining beaver hat, but as a faithful, humble representative of the lowly man of Galilee. He is also “well known” to the devil, who dreads him; and well known to God, who puts honor and favor upon him on every occasion.

The third double judgment is, “Dying, and behold they live.”

This does not mean that the “old man” is dying, for that funeral has already taken place. Paul did not say that the old man died daily, but “I die daily.” There is constantly going on in the life of the sanctified humiliations, public reproaches and mortifications of every kind which the outside world regards as a “dying” or “death.” In that respect every holy-hearted Christian must die daily, and can say with deep meaning, “in deaths frequent.”

The wonder with men who observe these things is how any one could survive. They well know that they themselves would go down crushed and heartbroken under such treatment, and yet in spite of the pens, tongues, and various weapons directed against the holiness people, “Behold they live!”

Were not certain things said about them from high quarters? Yes. Did not leading religious journals criticize and condemn the movement? Yes. Were not a number removed from official boards and prominent pulpits? Yes. Are not many of them dubbed cranks, fanatics, schismatic, and church splitters? Yes. Well, what has become of them? “Behold, they live!” What, are they not generally demolished and dead? No. “Behold, they live!”

How exceedingly trying to the feelings of an army to charge and shoot all day, lose a great number of soldiers, and wound and kill no one on the other side. How provoking for fine great battleships to cannonade a coast for hours and only destroy a poor dumb brute. And how amazing to the judgment and irritating to the feelings of great bodies and assemblies to level vast social and ecclesiastical artillery at a humble movement, and after the smoke and dust has cleared away to see that instead of being destroyed, behold, the movement lives.

A fourth verdict is in the sentence, “Poor, yet making many rich.”

The often heard statement about the holiness cause is that it is made up of humble and poor people. The affirmation sounds strangely like Scripture itself. “Ye see your calling, brethren, that not many mighty, not many noble are called — but God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith.” A similar following gathered about Wesley. And now to be told that the

objectionable movement today is composed mainly of the obscure and lowly and poor, makes us to feel we are in the true holiness succession.

Doubtless there is no disposition to deny the world's charge. It is felt to be no disgrace. And as it stands connected with the other part of the judgment, it can be received with all thankfulness and joy: "Poor, yet making many rich."

The Bible and history and our own observation agree in this marvelous statement of the poor making many rich.

Elijah was so poor that the birds fed him, but he left in his life a legacy of spiritual wealth which has made the world better off for all time. Many of the prophets, like him, wandered about "destitute, afflicted," but nevertheless brought succor, deliverance, light and salvation to many. Peter told the lame man that "silver and gold he had none," but such as he had he gave unto him; whereupon extending his hand, he made the poor cripple rich in health, both of body and soul, through the name of the Son of God.

A Methodist preacher came to the church of the writer from a circuit where he was stationed. His salary was less than rich people gave their cooks and carriage drivers, but under his ministry of eight days four young men were called to preach the Gospel and one hundred and twenty-five souls were made rich with the blessings of regeneration and sanctification. Some of the original number have fallen away, but a company remain that still give glory to God. If questioned they will reply that they possess something in their souls which they would not exchange for the gold mines of California, nor the wealth of the Indies.

There are bands of people all over the land today, unknown to fame, but well known to God, who have slim purses but full hearts; who own neither houses nor lands, and possess neither social nor ecclesiastical influence and yet thousands of souls are getting wealthy for eternity through their ministrations. They tell us where to obtain the pearl of great price and how to learn the secret of the Lord. He who secures the secret and finds the pearl feels that he now has something which compensates for every earthly trial and loss, and enriches and blesses the life far beyond all the favors of earthly fortune. The world looks on these lowly, meek-faced men and women and says they are poor people. Yes, replies Heaven, but they make many rich.

CHAPTER 31

THE THREE JUDGMENTS

Such are the nature and results of sin that no thoughtful or spiritual man can or will treat it lightly. The Bible says that “fools make a mock of sin.”

The violation of municipal or state law is felt to be a very grave act; but sin is far graver than that, as it is the transgression of a law that is divine, infinite and eternal. Such is God’s character, and so much depends on the integrity and perpetuity of His moral government that it is impossible for sin to be overlooked. Then the law itself is holy, just and good, and demands obedience. So holy and exalted is it that its infraction means the forfeiture of life by the transgressor. Either he must die, or some one who will take his place. Hence the appearance on earth of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.

But we are viewing sin now in its consequences to one who has been saved through the Redeemer, and yet concludes to go into sin again. What should, and will be, done to such an individual on the part of Heaven? God would still save, if possible, and yet the law is to be magnified, and the divine repugnance to and horror of sin manifested. There must be a method of dealing with such a soul, and if so we should be able to discover it in the Bible and also see it in life.

This dealing is beheld in three different kinds of judgment upon the erring Christian.

The first is a judgment of temporal affliction.

Under this head we see sickness, losses, bereavements, disappointments, accidents and circumstances of peculiar trial and distress. Of course these things are seen in the lives of people who are faithful and obedient, because they belong to the world in which we live. But there is a blissful consciousness in the heart of the innocent sufferer that these are not chastisements, but sufferings which are likely to come to all in a fallen world, and being received in the right spirit become means of grace and blessedness to the soul.

But let the reader mark this well: when these same sorrowful experiences

break and beat upon the unfaithful follower of Christ, the Spirit of God is by the heart to throw a new and painful light upon them, and show them as a chastening and punishment for transgression. It is a rod of suffering with honey at the end, if we will be admonished.

This is made clear in David's sin in regard to the census of the people. He must have been even guiltier in this matter than appears on the sacred page; for the divine punishment was severe. God offered him the ghastly alternatives of a famine, pestilence or the sword. With a thoroughly humble heart David chose the second, crying out, let me fall into the hands of God and not of man.

We knew a layman once who had great light and walked blamelessly for years, and began trifling with sin. At once his life, which had been placid, peaceful and uneventful, became marked with the most frightful perils. In a few weeks alone he came near losing his life three times and in a most dreadful way. At last he heard the voice of God in the warning judgments and returned to duty and faithfulness.

A second judgment is the death of the body.

This, according to the Scripture, comes from sin of a peculiar nature. There seems to be a "sin unto death," where prayer will be powerless to deliver the man from the grave. We do not refer to the cases of Herod, Ananias and Sapphira, but to persons who had known God and lived in His service.

If any one feels like questioning this statement let him turn to the thirteenth chapter of 1 Kings and read the melancholy history of the disobedient young prophet. He was a prophet to begin with, and his last service was full of moral heroism; but after that he so grossly disobeyed God that the judgment of a physical death fell upon him. No one, we presume, believes he lost his soul. We doubt not he heartily repented his misstep and misdeed as he galloped down the road, but evidently there was that in his disobedience of so grave a character that he forfeited his life.

We firmly believe that this second judgment of God is falling today in many quarters, and that it explains the sudden taking away of laymen and ministers who were in the prime of life. We believe that when the Records are open at the Last Day it will be found that the ridicule of sanctification, the oppression of holiness people, and the resistance of this spiritual movement, kept up against light, conscience and the rebukes of the Holy Ghost, made a conduct so offensive to God that it was sufficient to settle and seal the physical doom of the man, and put him in the grave ten, twenty

and even forty years ahead of time.

We have seen “holiness fighters” sometimes die in this way, when we do not believe the soul was lost. The spirit was saved as by fire; but the body had to pay the penalty of this peculiar sin against the Holy Ghost. We do not mean to say that this is the only kind of wrong-doing which brings down the divine judgment, but it certainly seems to be one.

There are some deathbeds where we are unable to pray with any unction for the recovery of the man. He wants to get well, begs us to ask God to restore him, and yet there is a bandage upon the mouth, a cord tying down the tongue, and a heavy, sickening weight upon the heart which will not allow us to lay hold on God and His promises. Even here we seem to be in the presence of a “sin unto death;” “I do not say that we shall pray for it.”

Who ever heard of sanctified people sending for holiness ridiculers and fighters to pray for them on a death-bed! But repeatedly we have known the contrary, and the man who struck the holy cause with tongue and pen was himself struck down; and now sending for the people whom he had persecuted, begged them to supplicate for him and his recovery; and lo! to their amazement they could not get hold of God. They were in the presence of a God-smitten man. He had forfeited the life lease of a body which he had put to an improper use. He had withstood light. He had opposed a doctrine and experience about which the Bible says, “This is the will of God.” And now, like Samson, he dies twenty years ahead of time, with a prayer and death-rattle struggling together for mastery in his throat.

The third divine judgment falls upon soul and body Spiritual and physical death come together.

This most fearful of the three woes, comes of course upon the most aggravated cases. The man is either struck down, or is given over to destroy himself. The Scripture mentions both instances of ruin. Whether fire from the altar, the opening earth, or more hidden divine energies were used to sweep away the offender; or whether Saul with his sword, or Judas with his rope, end life and all possibility of salvation forever; still in either class it is evident that both soul and body are alike doomed and damned.

One characteristic of this most dreadful of the three judgments is its long deferral. A man marked for this disaster beholds around him a number of Christians under the first judgment of sickness, sorrow, pain and loss, while none of these things touch him. He sees still others going down into the grave, while he with greater, graver offenses lives on. In a word, the

young prophet is struck down into the grave, while the old prophet, who betrayed him and was a far worse man, continues to live, even attends the funeral of the smitten one, and says, "Alas, my brother!"

He is prospering, is flourishing like a green bay tree, and God seems to have overlooked him. So it seems to the careless student of the Bible and of God's dealings in life. And yet the man is actually ripening for eternal destruction!

He has lived through the chastening and discipline of the first judgment, and comes out not only not benefited but worse. He is hardened under suffering.

Again he has, strange to say, missed the arrow which brings untimely death to the body. But he has brought himself into a condition and position in the spiritual world where the heaviest judgments of God fall. And because they are so heavy and hopeless they are held back. The victim himself fails to read the handwriting on the wall. He fails to see that he is filling up his cup of iniquity as did the unhappy king of Israel and as did the Canaanites before him.

There are few Christians but have felt more or less the force of the first judgment. Many of us have seen the second falling upon an erring life like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. As for the third, numbers of God's people, if placed upon the witness stand, would be compelled to testify that they have beheld the sickening and dreadful occurrence again and again.

The light, chaffy character, the superficial student of the dark volume of sin will hardly like this chapter. But he who has brooded upon the agony of Christ in Gethsemane, and His awful death upon the cross; he who is acquainted with the corruption of the heart, and contemplates Sin as flung off by the hand of God into hell, it writhes, twists and bites itself in blasphemous rage and impotent malice forever, will see what wickedness has cost, what it has done and is still doing, and will recognize the necessity and justice of every one of the three judgments.

May the writer and reader be saved from them all.

CHAPTER 32

THE SEVEN THOUSAND

The prophet Elijah, after his flight from Jezebel into the wilderness, fell into a profound despondency. With his failure he felt that the cause of God was defeated, and made the additional mistake in thinking that he was the only true representative God had left in the land. In fact, he said as much, affirming with all sincerity that “he alone was left.” In the midst of his despair and erroneous conclusions God speaks and tells him that so far from his being the only one faithful to Him in the land there were seven thousand who had never bowed the knee to Baal.

Several thoughts suggest themselves as we brood upon this statement about the unrecognized seven thousand.

One reflection that would come first to most minds is, what kind of followers of God could these be when the presence of seven thousand in one country had not been recognized. Almost any critic would say what would be thought if seven thousand soldiers should be for years in a small district, or territory, and no one knew it; and that the argument of the powerlessness of Israel’s seven thousand is strong, because Elijah had to be told of their existence. What had they been doing or not doing that God’s prophet did not know anything of them?

As we listen to this we can recall similar bodies of religious people. They may be in the community, but they are not visible, get-at-able and count-on-able.

Still while this may be true here and there, we cannot draw the proof from the Scripture about the seven thousand, from the fact that God Himself declared their loyalty in the words that their knees had never bowed to Baal. If unknown to Elijah, that condition of things must be explained in another way than by the charge of faithlessness.

A second reflection is the profound mistake made by good people in regard to the poverty and weakness of God’s cause on earth. Elijah thought it had dwindled down to one, when the true figures for that small country alone were seven thousand. Certainly that was a big mistake.

For our life we have never been able to adopt the lamentations of some over the state of Christ's kingdom in this world. To believe what they say, then the churches are all dead; the preachers hopelessly backslidden; God and His truth are being defeated on every side, and things getting worse all the while.

We know that things are bad enough, but we do not believe for a moment that Christ ever has been or ever will be defeated. Having conquered the devil, overcome the world, and broken the bonds of death in the days of physical weakness, it would certainly be a strange thing for Him to be overcome now in the days of His ascended glory and power, by beings and forces He has already vanquished.

We believe that Christ never had more followers, and truer ones at that, than in these days. There never was greater Christian liberality and philanthropy, never more religious books and papers published, and never more active work done for the salvation of souls than now. We believe that grace abounds over sin, and that Christ is going to overwhelm completely the great adversary and throw him with all his dark brood into hell.

A third reflection is that there is a vast amount of hidden or unrevealed good in the world.

Back of the visible churches, missions, chapels, public benevolences, and various kinds of special good, there is still left a wealth of kindness, faithfulness, quiet goodness, and unobtrusive loyalty to God and man, which never gets into catalogues and general statistics, much less papers, whether they be secular or religious.

There are some men who are like certain little stores, that have all their goods on the counter and in the show case. There are other Christians who have a great deal more under the counter than they put in the show window.

The parable is quite simple. Some men are very loquacious and tell all they do for God. Others are less noisy, but do much more, giving more, suffering more, and performing more. Sooner or later we get to know both classes. Truly some men's works go beforehand, while others follow after to the judgment both of earth and heaven.

We once were in the pastorate of large city churches for quite a number of years, and got to know well the brother of facile speech who exhorted others to come up on financial lines. The study of certain cash books of the church at the end of the year revealed some curious things to the writer of

this chapter. One was that the loquacious brother talked mainly, giving at times but little, and at other times nothing. Another was that certain quiet-faced, gentle-speeched and sometimes silent individuals in the congregation gave of their means in a most surprising and heart-moving manner. It was a case of the seven thousand.

In still other instances the blustering, demonstrative head of the household quite captured one at the first visit; but later developments revealed that the real character, the abiding worth, the genuine Christlikeness was on the other side of the house. It was not seen at first, but was at last, and the proportion was as seven thousand to one.

A fourth reflection is that the seven thousand are unknown because ruled out by the judgment of some of God's people. The unfavorable sentence is that they are laboring, living and developing on different lines from the critics and judges.

It is an old trick or habit not to recognize people in the religious life who do not measure according to certain standards which men make or think they have discovered already made in the Bible. Thousands of human beings were put to death at a river crossing because they could not utter "shib," but said "sib." A war was once carried on by two branches of Christian believers over a little syllable of two letters; one insisting that it was "on" and the other that it was "ou." The disciples of Christ wanted certain other disciples stopped from their work of casting out devils, because "they follow not with us." The ejection of a devil was considered nothing by them, in view of this other lacking external something. So the "shibs" and the "ons" and the brethren of one road would relegate to inactivity, ignominy and invisibility all the "sibs" and "ous" and the brethren on the other road.

Men are still at this silly, narrow work. They were accustomed to worship God in a church resembling a dwelling; now let all other temples look like a log cabin or come under their ban. They have adopted an odd-looking hat or bonnet to wear. They were saved or sanctified while wearing this article of dress. Now be it resolved, that all who do not conform to this mode be promptly excommunicated. They have taken up a certain style of leading a revival or altar service. It is loud and boisterous, with funny sayings in the exhortation, and even jocular remarks in the prayer. People must be "whooped up" and "rushed through," so as to say ten or fifteen or twenty got the blessing in every service. There are other workers who believe in waiting on God, patiently, humbly, persistently day after day, as did the disciples, until the power falls and salvation sweeps the altar and church like

a flood. But this latter class not following with them are promptly ruled out and placed among the invisible seven thousand. They are nobodies and nowhere.

Good people have “hobbies” of various kinds. It may be of creed or practice. It may pertain to dress or doctrine. It may be some idea or notion; some scheme or work; some fanciful interpretation of Scripture, or some rule of life. But one thing is certain, that while they stand ready to forgive multitudes of transgressions, there is one sin that hath never forgiveness; and that is the crime of saying anything against their hobby, and, above all, refusing to ride off in the air on it with them. Of course by this offense all such offenders are counted unworthy of being numbered with the Lord’s followers. With a Podsnap wave of the hand they are retired into the obscurity of the seven thousand, while the solitary faithful one, loaded down with all the oracles, all the orthodoxies, and all the responsibilities, and the last edition of the Scripture received just from the skies, comes groaning up the road lamenting that everybody is cold, dead, formal, false and backslidden but himself.

A final reflection is that when Elijah thought he was the only one true to God in the land, not only did he miss the mark by seven thousand, but one of those seven thousand named Elisha was to equal if not surpass him in his miracles of power, and in his life be a better illustration of Christ than he (Elijah) had ever been.

Let none of us despair when Elijahs of today wrap their mantles about them and prepare to leave us. God remembers His church and people, and will certainly send along Elisha to comfort and help us. And let no one dream for a moment that one man has all the light, and all the oracles, and is God’s one mouthpiece. He may be a good man and have brought fire down on the people in prayer and sermons in church and at camp meeting, and that repeatedly; but God has thousands beside him in the land who will quietly one day take his place, and the man will scarcely be missed and soon forgotten.

The church is not built on any human that lives or is to live. It rests upon that great rock — the Son of God. So Elijah may fret and repine and think he is the only one who is true to God, and be honest in the conviction; and yet, when he dies or is translated, the church with its vast and intricate machinery will roll on without a single jar or jolt, and without the stoppage of a single moment. Elisha may step into Elijah’s place and fall into the same mistake, and die in that mental error. Then it is that God will bury him, and let the land go without prophets for a long while, to show the

people that it is God and not man who is redeeming this world, and guiding the church safe home to glory.

Let us all be of good comfort. If Elijah is taken, Elisha will be sent to us. If he is not sufficient, let us remember that back of him, in addition to the visible and working forces of the church, are the seven thousand unknown, untrumpeted, unblazoned faithful ones whom God can reveal to the astonished world at any time, and until revealed to the public may be doing more for God and humanity than many whose names appear in the papers and whose fame sounds from shore to shore.

CHAPTER 33

“BREAD UPON THE WATERS”

The caption of this chapter is a remarkable Bible expression. By some we are told that it stands for the sowing of rice in flooded fields; by others that it refers to kindness to sailors; and still others to the fact that the seed of the breadfruit tree will be washed by the waves of the sea until it is cast upon a sandy desert island, where taking root, it will spring up and transform an uninhabitable rock into a shady, fruitful and beautiful abode.

Anyhow the figure in the sentence is recognized by all to refer to deeds of benevolence or kindness. The bread stands for one thing and the waters for another, the former for the generous, loving deed, while the latter very forcibly in its wideness represents the extent of the world's need, while the waves and currents bearing away the loaf from sight is a warning in itself against the expectation of seeing immediate results, and so a preparation against disappointment.

In addition to this there are words of counsel and exhortation all looking to our being persistently kind, and to keep casting the bread upon the waters no matter what else takes place. We are told that if we observe the wind, we will not sow; that in the morning we are to do good, and in the evening, when naturally tired, and feeling we have done enough for that day, that even then we are not to stay the hand. The argument given for this is that we know not which shall prosper, the morning or the evening labor.

The urgent entreaty for us to be kind does not stop there, but we are told to “give a portion to seven, also to eight.” The Lord seems to fear we will stop in our benevolence because of a goodly number relieved in the past; so He says we are not to forget the “eighth,” who came along late and found us exhausted in body and almost drained in purse. Remember him also. Do not send him away with the words, “I am worn out with giving and helping people. I have assisted seven today.” The Lord says gently and quietly, “Give to him also.” The reason mentioned is very pathetic, “Thou knowest not the evil that is in the earth.”

In other words, we do not dream of the number of starving bodies and starving hearts all around us. Some are dying for bread, and some are dying for consideration, friendship and affection.

Thou knowest not the trouble, the want, the grief, the desperation and misery that are with you on the cars and passing you on the streets. This the Lord intimates, who has the perpendicular view of the heart and knows what is going on behind doors and sees the gnawing wolf under the closely wrapped cloak.

A friend of the writer in great agony of mind from many troubles committed suicide. Another friend of ours met the despairing man an hour before in a street car, saw his gloomy face, but said nothing to him. Afterwards, when he heard of the awful act, he said: "How I wish I had known he was in trouble, I would have helped him." If the Scriptures had been faithfully followed that day, a life might have been delivered and a soul saved from the pit of destruction.

The writer knew a young girl who was heiress to a great fortune. All was swept away by the war. She moved away, took in sewing, would not appeal to her relatives for assistance, and was found dead in a garret. Through a physician's examination it was discovered that she had starved to death.

Oh, we say, if we only knew who needs us, we would gladly help the famished hearts and bodies about us and be glad to do the kindness.

No, we do not always know, but God does, and in the striking picture He has drawn in the eleventh chapter of Ecclesiastes gives us in the figure of the "waters" a glimpse of the wideness of human necessity, and in the row of eight claimants on our bounty, fast following each other, conveys a hint of what may or should take place. This is followed up by a warning against weariness, when the evening is seen coming on with its waning light, exhausted energies, and whispered temptation that it is time to cease from labor and take rest.

God gives us a gracious assurance about the result of such a life. The word is that it shall not be in vain, but that the bread we cast on the waters shall be found again after many days. In other words we will get back that which we gave away. As we were kind and heaped benefits upon people, kindness and benefits will be poured upon us in due time.

In one sense we get immediate pay for doing a right and benevolent act. The soul is instantly enriched and strengthened and blessed in such deeds. So that a man cannot afford to neglect this kind of life. It has proved and always will be a means of spiritual enjoyment and enlargement, and a

wellspring in the soul of purest pleasure.

But there is another consequence that is more distant. That result is a returning tide of kindnesses to the man who was kind, a flow of love and gratitude to the one so full of love and thoughtfulness for others. The Bible says this may not occur until “after many days.” There are good reasons for the delay which we have not time to mention. The point we are interested in now is that the “bread” is certain to come back after a while. God says so. That settles it, and life proves it.

We once read of a little child in Berlin who was accustomed to walk out in the Park with the other children for sunshine and exercise. She soon observed on a wooden settee by the side of one of the walks a poorly attired, sad looking old man. Of a sympathetic nature, she could not resist the impulse of taking his hand and giving him a kind greeting. This she did daily for months. The needy looking man was anything but poor in purse. he was simply starving for love and kindness, and when he died it was discovered that he had left his entire fortune to the little girl who for months took time from her play to run up to him, shake his hand, smile upon him, and wish him a pleasant morning. The bread came back with tremendous increase. The waters swelled the loaves.

We knew a lady who became a boarder at a private hotel where there was poor service, and the guests ate rapidly and in silence, without any exchange of civility or pleasant table attentions. This woman by a quiet unobtrusive politeness, by a thoughtful passing of dishes to those who needed them, revolutionized the entire room and house itself in a single week. Then the bread she had passed to others began both in a figurative and literal way to come back to her. One thing soon became noticeable and that was, all at the table saw that she should never lack for courtesies and attentions of every kind.

We once read in a New England history, of a Dr. Dwight, who took pity upon a sick and suffering Indian at his door in the time of the early settlement of the colonies. The Indian thus benefited and relieved went away silent, according to the nature of his race. The dark forest swallowed him up from sight, and years rolled away. One night the town was attacked and plundered by an Indian tribe, and Dr. Dwight with others was led away into captivity. Of course every man looked for death or lifetime slavery. One night while the physician named was stretched on the ground trying to sleep in spite of the tight bonds on his arms, he suddenly felt them severed by a sharp knife and was assisted to his feet by an Indian warrior. Unrecognized in the dark, he bade him with a whisper in broken English to

follow him. He led him for several days and nights through the trackless wilderness, brought him to the outskirts of the place where he lived, and telling the doctor that all this was for “helping poor sick Indian,” he vanished in the wood.

We knew a Confederate officer who was with others rapidly leaving a battlefield closely pursued by the Federals, when a wounded soldier in the Northern army lying near the road cried out to him for the sake of mercy and pity to give him a drink of water.

This Confederate colonel, without a moment’s hesitation, stopped and, lifting the wounded man’s head, placed his canteen to the sufferer’s lips and watched him drink while the bullets cut up the ground all around him. When the service had been rendered, he placed the man’s head back upon the turf, and escaped from the approaching column of soldiers as by a miracle.

The bread had been cast upon the waters. To all appearances it had gone to the bottom. But God said it would return after many days. And so it proved. After many days, we think it was ten years, this Confederate officer was in Washington seeking a certain governmental position in the South. As he was trying unavailingly to obtain the appointment, he was suddenly recognized by a leading official in one of the departments, and asked if he did not take time once in a battle to give a drink of water to a wounded man. The reply was that the circumstance was remembered.

“Well, sir,” said the gentleman, “I was that man.”

The outcome of it all was that the official in Washington having great influence with the President, secured at once the position for Colonel M_____ that he had tried in vain to obtain and had desired of receiving. The bread came back in a most remunerative office, which Colonel M_____ held for years.

We ought all to be good and kind, because it is right and Christlike. But the argument for benevolence made by the wise man in the book of Ecclesiastes is that it pays to be good. The Bible says so, and life proves it.

CHAPTER 34

THE COMING TRIUMPH

We have often wondered how men can take pessimistic views of the cause of the Son of God in this world.

As for ourselves we confess openly and gladly that we are optimists of the first water and in the front rank. The following are the reasons: First, we may have been cast in our creation in a hopeful mold. Second, we are not dyspeptic. Third, the convincing argument of our personal salvation. We have ever felt that if Christ could save us, He could save any man. Fourth, the nature, principles, life and power of Christianity. We could not but observe that it was fashioned not only to overrule the billows of this world, but to quiet the storm itself. Fifth, the Word of God.

This last reason is simply overwhelming. The Bible is the statement of God about the origin and history of Sin and Salvation. It speaks continually of the superiority of the latter over the former, and gives thrilling prophetic descriptions of the coming triumph of the Gospel. The closing book, Revelation, is in truth a bulletin about the last battle, in which is told the overwhelming defeat of the cause of the devil, and the stupendous victory of the gospel of Christ. It ends with a vision of Satan, Sin and the False Prophet in the Lake of Fire, while Holiness triumphs everywhere on earth, and the New Jerusalem is seen descending through skies angel thronged, and echoing with the thundering shouts of the Redeemed.

The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah is especially bright, strong and hopeful. We commend it to the low-spirited. The caption of the chapter is "The glory of the church in the abundant access of the Gentiles." A few of the striking features we select for the encouragement of God's people.

One reference is to the vast accessions to the church in the latter day glory. The prophet likens it to clouds of doves flying towards the windows. This should be peculiarly comforting to those who have allowed themselves to become despondent because of the great falling off in membership of several of our largest denominations. The weakening and going down of a denomination is not the defeat and overthrow of the church of God. The words are not necessarily synonymous.

Recently we saw a picture in a religious paper of a preacher pushing a line of young men and women into the church. They seemed to be reluctant, confused and even worried, but the preacher, standing at an angle of forty-five degrees, exerted all his force and pushed the file of individuals into the open door. But, alas! at a corner window another crowd of young people were seen escaping from the church as if delighted to go. Instead of flocking like doves to the window, they were flying like escaped birds from a cage. The heart fairly sickened at the picture, because we knew it was a truthful one in multitudes of instances.

The day is coming that we will not need to use the social, business, best choir, best congregation, and best church argument to get people to join; when no entreaty or compulsion will be necessary; but the power of God will be on the nations, and men will rush to the house of God and gladly give their hearts and lives to Him.

A second reference to the coming triumph touches upon the liberality or gifts of the people. The prophet says, "They shall bring their silver and gold with them."

Something is going to happen to the church that will completely solve the financial problem. No more church raffles and fairs; no more suppers and theatricals; no more pleading and begging for an hour at a time with the soul-sickening, auctioneer-like cry, "Who will give five dollars?"

A great love will come upon the church, a beautiful spirit of sacrifice fill every heart, and money flow like a stream to Him and for Him who has given something to the soul far better than gold and silver.

A third reference is to church work. Not such as is commonly recognized by that name, but spiritual work, in the salvation of the people. Isaiah says, "Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night."

Here is a very remarkable picture. A church with two services on Sunday and a Wednesday night prayer-meeting, three or four hours in all out of twenty-four, is thought to be doing well. When that same church puts forth its energies for ten days or two weeks in a protracted meeting where there are two services daily, the labor is thought to be extraordinary, and people and preacher confess to great physical exhaustion. And yet only twenty to thirty hours out of the two hundred and forty of the ten days have been given to God. According to Isaiah the church is coming to far greater things.

The Salvation Army keep their doors open every night from eight to eleven or twelve. This looks like herculean labor measured up to the performances of many of our city temples and cathedrals. And yet when examined we find that out of eight thousand seven hundred and sixty hours in the year only fourteen hundred and sixty were given to God. For seven thousand three hundred hours the hall was deserted and silent.

The prophet beholds something amazingly beyond this, when every hour is given to God, where the doors of the church are never shut day nor night, and the work goes on unbrokenly from one year's end to another.

At first this strikes one as incredible, but the Bible says it is true, and reflection shows how it can be true.

In times of war certain factories have given to them what are called "hurry orders." This means then that the great buildings not only throb with work in the day, but are ablaze at night with myriads of twinkling lights while the same number of laborers crowd the rooms and halls as did in the daytime. Two sets of workmen fill the shops and line the tables, while garments, hats, shoes, shot, shell and military accoutrements pour out in unceasing streams from their busy hands.

The Bible unmistakably teaches that a "hurry order" of grace is in the near future. God is going to cut the work short in righteousness. His church is to run day and night. Every hour of the twenty-four shall see the house of God open and salvation going on. The work that we are doing today will appear like child's play compared to the labors put forth in the latter days. We doubt not that churches will get to see that the main business of life after all is to save men, and feeling this way, they will so act, the Lord being with them and working in them.

We all know that many institutions of the devil are run ceaselessly day and night. Certain halls and houses of sin are open every hour. As we have observed this, we have frequently said that it would be to the reproach of Christianity if it did not do equally as well. It would surely be dreadful at the Judgment to have it appear that the followers of Satan served him more faithfully than Christians did their God. It would be mortifying to the church and humbling to heaven.

But according to Isaiah this reproach cannot be urged. In the millennial glory the church will devote every hour to the work of saving men, and that too with an ardor and devotion far outstripping the zeal of sinners to destroy them.

A fourth reference is to the honor given to the church by its former persecutors. The prophet says, "The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet."

Let the reader bear in mind that Isaiah is not speaking of some backslidden denomination, or oyster-frying congregation, but of the true church of God, whose glory has come.

Affliction and persecution have ever been visited upon the church of God by the world. Then the cold, formal wing of some ecclesiasticism has ever been ready to overshadow and oppress the deeply spiritual of its membership. Weapons of ridicule or of sterner, ghastlier stuff, according to the age and times, have been seen to be cruelly busy. Stones, swords, gibbets, crosses, mobs, imprisonment, slander and persecution of every kind have abounded. Who is not familiar with the hard, harsh, cruel things said about the cause and people of God until today? Truly the words of the prophet were correct, "they that afflicted thee."

The promise in this chapter is that they shall come bending to thee. Here is recognition, justice done, amendment made, and victory. And the triumph is complete, the enemies of God's people are down in the dust at their feet.

There seems to be a kind of retribution in this, with the working out of a righteous principle. They tried to make others bend, and now have to bend themselves. They put human beings in the dust, and now have to get down themselves.

Joseph's brethren seemed to have it all their own way for years; they afflicted a beautiful character and caused him to cry out to them for mercy. After a while the tide turned, and they are seen bending and pleading at the feet of the man whom they had wronged.

Four men once did a preacher a great wrong. With a bleeding heart he submitted and left the matter entirely with God, and without any spirit, or desire of revenge. He never asked for any kind of triumph over them. But some things work out and come to us whether we ask or not. And so in less than five years each one of those four men in the strangest way was brought bending to him. The favors they asked were far from being of small import, but he was able to grant them all.

We wonder if the Church of England, which has elevated a marble bust of

John Wesley in their leading cathedral, remembers how they afflicted and persecuted him in his lifetime. Their ministers had him arrested, their church doors were locked against him. Today that same church bends to and exalts him.

So shall a universal veneration and honor be given by the world to the church described by Isaiah. The stones which they hurled at her will be carefully gathered up, and erected into a monument to her glory. They will be glad to say this and that man was born in her; and will, after all their detraction and ridicule, testify that a day in her courts is better than a thousand spent in the tents of wickedness.

But this church, which obtains honor at last in the sight of men, is not an ecclesiastical organization filled with the unconverted and unspiritual, and run on questionable and worldly lines. It is made up of people, according to the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, who have taken the Lord to be their sun, whose light never fails, whose mourning days have ended, who are all righteous in the sight of God, and where a little one among them is equal to a thousand, and a small one has become a strong nation. It is evidently a full salvation church.

CHAPTER 35

THE AFTERMATH OF LIFE

In some districts of country, after the harvest or a field of grass has been reaped and gathered, a second crop springs up which is called the aftermath. Sometimes it rivals its predecessor, and even when failing here, is always beautiful and profitable. The sight of bare and yellow looking fields clothed with green again is an attractive spectacle, while the vision of herds and flocks roaming over it and cropping of this later richness appeals to the mind and heart most gratefully in various ways.

There is an aftermath of the day. The sun sets behind the distant hills, and is lost in the gold and purple clouds of the west; but in some countries for a short while, and in others for several hours, a softened light fills the air and falls, in an indescribable glory, upon land and sea. It is the reflection of the day that is over and gone. Some mirror in the west, hanging at a certain angle, brings back a lovely vision of the departing form, and to the heart it seems the aftermath of the day. It is not night, but another day, like and yet unlike its predecessor; in some respects more beautiful, and in others far more powerful.

There is an aftermath of life. Some man or woman dies and is buried in the country graveyard or city cemetery. The flowers are placed upon the mound, the slab or monument is set up at the head of the grave, and we say in our haste that they are gone forever.

But after a little we notice that there was something about them which we could not bury, something which would not remain in the graveyard. We discovered it in an indefinable presence when we returned to the bereaved home. We recognized it in precious memories of the deceased, and realized it in the influence left upon life and character by the words and acts of the now silent sleeper in the cemetery. Being dead, they yet spoke. Their deeds lived after them. The life, like a Nile, had receded, but a deposit had been left that brought spiritual wealth to many. The sun of a faithful life had set, but a reflected glow was left in the home, church and community which was felt with the heart as well as beheld with the eye of even an ordinary observation.

Death does not end all. We live after we die, on earth, though the soul itself

has risen to heaven or sunk in hell. The good that men do remains after them and is not interred with their bones. We will have to go to the tomb to find the body or the skeleton, but back to the breathing, thinking, acting world, to find the real man who still exists in the lives of the people he comforted, the falling ones he steadied, the needy he relieved, and the backslidden and lost whom he brought to God.

There are families today where the name of certain beloved ones cannot be mentioned without the eyes filling with tears. This is the aftermath of faithfulness. The dew comes to the eye as we stand left in the gloaming of such a vanished life. The heart roams over, and lies down, and rests and feeds, upon this strange after-crop of present influence, when the scythe of death has gathered that life in, long weary months and years ago.

The sun has set, but the glow is left in the sky. The loved ones are dead and yet they live. They are out on the hillside with many palefaced sleepers, but somehow they have never left home. The portrait on the wall, the chair yonder in the corner, the little trunk in the garret, the tiny shoe or stocking taken out of the old chest and wept over, declare in their peculiar influence over our hearts that the day of their power is not yet over and gone. The sunset has come, but from out of the sunset comes a softened light, a tender glory, a breath from the skies, that compensates in a measure for the loss of the day. The sun of life is gone, but the gloaming is left in sacred remembrances, precious mental associations, and holy influences that at times feel like a strange sweet kind of day in itself.

Sometimes the mightiest work of a soul is accomplished after that spirit has gone into heaven. It is said of Samson that he slew more in his death than he did in his life. It can be said of others that they wrought more after death than before death. The prodigal is brought to God through the memory of a sainted mother. The obdurate husband is broken up and yields to the Savior over the pulseless body of his wife. The ungodly father is led to Christ through the death of his child.

In these instances of mother, wife and child, we see that the aftermath did more than the first planting; the twilight surpassed the day. And yet it is never to be forgotten that there would have been no aftermath but for the first harvest, and no gloaming if there had been no day.

An evangelist tells of a boy sitting on a doorstep in the twilight and looking upward. He was asked what he was doing, and he replied, "Flying my kite." The gentleman responded, "I don't see any kite." The boy said, "No, it is too dark now, and the kite is too high up, but just feel the string." Then

as the gentleman held the cord a moment the lad said with a smile, "Don't you feel it pull?" There was no question after that, and the man walked away with a sermon in his heart.

The father and mother have gone into the tomb; the wife and child have flitted away from the fireside into heaven; they no longer are seen, but oh how their lives and influences pull the heart.

The same preacher tells of an infidel father who came home from the funeral of his only child. Grief-stricken, he entered his lonely and bereft home and flung himself upon his bed with a heart feeling like lead. Exhausted by much watching, he fell asleep, and dreamed that he came to a dark rushing river. On the other shore he saw to his delight his little daughter, who stretched her arms to him and cried, "Come this way, father." He felt even in his dream that she was calling him to heaven, and with the following words strangely sounding in his ears, "He that believeth on the Son of God shall be saved," he, all broken and softened, awoke with tears and prayers, and falling on his knees by his bedside was saved.

The string pulled.

It is said of Elisha that after he had been dead and buried quite awhile, the Moabites threw a dead body in his grave; when the instant that the corpse touched the bones of the prophet, the dead man arose and stood upon his feet.

This remarkable occurrence illustrates the very thought we are presenting, of posthumous influence. The dead Elisha could still quicken people on earth. The grave does not end a man's power for good in this world. A Christian physically dead and gone to dust and ashes has something left in book, article, conversation, spirit, influence and life, which will, through God, be able to electrify and vitalize the spiritually dead and make them leap into salvation.

Thank God for this after-power, this aftermath, this beautiful gloaming of religious influence when our earthly sun has set in the grave.

But that we may bless people after death, we must be a benediction during life. If we would exert an aftermath of spiritual influence while asleep in the tomb, we must first have a harvest of goodness and usefulness on earth. If we would leave a beautiful gloaming behind us when dead, we must see to it that the Sun of Righteousness makes a blessed daytime for us, and in us, and through us while we live.

